GENESIS

New Translation with commentary

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GENESIS

The Beginning

1:1 In the beginning[1] God created the heavens and the earth.[2]
2 And the earth was without form and void,[3] and there was darkness upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.[4] **3** And God said, "Let

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[1] The beginning of this world's history. This first verse functions as a title, and contradicts the theory of evolution as an explanation of origins.

[2] The only one who could pass this information on to Adam was the Creator Himself; the Author is identifying Himself. Adam certainly developed a written form for the language God gave him, and he would have made a written record of everything the Creator told him about the beginning of this planet. If Enoch wrote (Jude 14), it was because Adam wrote first, and all those writings were in Noah's Ark, to be delivered to Moses in due time.

[3] Revelation 21:1 states that this world as we know it is "the first earth", which disproves the 'gap theory'. However, this phrase, “without form and void”, is one of the arguments used in defense of that theory. Aside from the pressure exerted by the theory of evolution (which is scientifically impossible), it was the discovery of fossils of creatures that no longer exist on earth that motivated that theory: how could we account for those fossils (not recognizing that it was Noah’s flood that created them)? It is possible to translate the verb ‘create’ (in v. 1) as ‘recreate’, and so it was argued that a former earth had been destroyed, and then God created a new one. Use was also made of Ezekiel 28:13, “You were in Eden, the garden of God”. Although verse 12 addresses the king of Tyre, the following descriptttion is not of a man, “you were the anointed cherub who covers” (v. 14). They argued that the first world was Lucifer’s ‘garden’, but when he rebelled, God destroyed it, resulting in the “without form and void”. Since all fossils are in sedimentary rocks, that were a result of Noah’s flood, there is no need for a ‘gap’.

[4] “Face of the deep”, “face of the waters”, and verse 10 says that the dry ground “appeared”. And that was after half of the water had been placed above the dome. When something ‘appears’ it is usually

there be light", and there was light.[1] **4** And God saw the light, that it was good; and God made a separation between the light and the darkness. **5** And God called the light, Day, and called the darkness, Night. And there was dusk and dawn, day one.[2]

6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters". **7** And God made the dome, and made a separation between the waters that were under the dome and the waters that were above the dome; and it was so.[3] **8** And God called the dome, Heaven. And there was dusk and dawn, day two.[4]

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together in one place, and let the dry ground appear"; and it was so. **10** And God called the dry ground, Earth, and called the gathering of the waters, Seas; and God saw that it was good. **11** And God said, "Let the earth bring

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small, compared to the surrounding situation. Apparently, the surface of the globe was mostly water, at the beginning.

[1] How could there have been light before the creation of the sun? “God is light”, 1 John 1:5, and He resides “in unapproachable light”, 1 Timothy 6:16. It was just a matter of using a little of His light.

[2] On the fourth day God created the sun "to rule the day", but the day already existed; that is why the Text says "day one". If there was light and darkness, then the earth was already rotating on its axis, and there was a centralized source of light.

[3] The dome was solid and translucent [perhaps frozen hydrogen]. It had to be solid to withstand the weight of the water; and it had to be translucent to let the sunlight through. Half of the water now on earth was above the dome, and served to filter the harmful rays that come from the sun: ultraviolet and infrared. That is why men and animals lived longer, and reached greater size, before the Flood, when the dome was destroyed.

[4] The dome defined the nature of this world from the beginning until the Flood. Perhaps that is why a whole day is dedicated to it, although creating the dome, and moving half of the water above it, was a major undertaking.

forth vegetation: herb that yields seed, and fruit-tree that bears fruit after its kind, whose seed is in it, upon the earth"; and it was so.[1] **12** And the land brought forth vegetation: herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in it, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. **13** And there was dusk and dawn, day three.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of heaven, to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. **15** And let them be lights in the dome of heaven, to give light to the earth"; and it was so. **16** And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; as well as the stars. **17** And God put them in the dome of heaven to give light to the earth,[2] **18** and to rule the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. **19** And there was dusk and dawn, day four.

20 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures; and let birds fly above the earth, under the dome of heaven".[3] **21** And God created the great sea creatures,[4] and every living creature that moved, with which the waters swarmed, after its kind, and every winged bird,

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[1] 'Seed' and 'fruit' are emphasized, perhaps because they represent food, but presumably every type of vegetation was created that day. Before the Flood, all birds, animals and people were herbivorous, so it was necessary to create the vegetation first, so they would have something to eat.

[2] Since the dome was translucent, men looking up would not even know of its existence, seeing the sun, moon and stars normally. To them the luminaries would simply be in the heaven.

[3] The Text does not say how far above the surface of the earth the dome was, but it was evidently farther up than any bird can fly.

[4] Evidently there was a variety of such creatures, but we are not given any details.

according to its kind;[1] and God saw that it was good. **22** And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth". **23** And there was dusk and dawn, day five.

24 And God said,[2] "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle, and creeping things, and animals of the earth, according to their kinds"; and it was so. **25** And God made the animals of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good. **26** And God said, "Let Us[3] make man in our image, after our

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[1] I wonder why the fish and birds were created before the animals, but the Text does not say.

[2] Hebrews 11:3 says: “By faith we understand that the ages were created by a word from God, so that the things that are seen were made out of things invisible”. Just so: in this account of the Creation “God said” occurs six times in creative acts (it occurs twice more giving orders to created things, and once God talking to Himself). Why the emphasis on the spoken word? God could have done it all just with His thought. Consider: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Proverbs 18:21); “By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:37, Sovereign Jesus speaking). There are many texts that indicate the importance of language, spoken and written, and the need to make responsible use thereof. And there are numerous passages that record how a human being brought about a manifestation of God’s power by speaking. God gave us the example when He created our world and our race.

[3] The verb is plural, which agrees with the doctrine of the Trinity. Looking back, we can see some veiled references in the OT, the clearest perhaps being Isaiah 48:16, which mentions all three persons. The doctrine was defined by the glorified Christ in Matthew 28:19: "As you go, make disciples of all ethnic nations: baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Our Lord defined the Trinity here. According to Greek grammar, the use of 'and' plus the definite article with a series of items makes it clear that the items are distinct entities. So then, "the Father" is

likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth,[1] and over everything that creeps upon the ground". **27** And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.[2]

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different from "the Son" who is different from "the Holy Spirit". So we have three persons. But Jesus also said, "**the** name", singular, not 'names'. Therefore, we have only one name. God is one 'name', or essence, subsisting in three persons. This baptism is to be administered into the name of the Trinity, which represents a new revelation concerning the nature of God. It also represents a new 'religion', very different from those that were known until then. In the Old Testament we have veiled references, which looking back we can associate with the Trinity, but here we have the first clear statement about it. (To read more about this baptism, please see my article, 'Baptisms in the Bible', available on my website: www.prunch.org, but also in the appendix.)

[1] God turned the administration of this world over to the human race, which means that we are responsible for what happens down here, or would be, except for the Fall. Calamitously, when Adam followed Satan's word, he turned that administration over to Satan. When testing Jesus, Satan showed Him the kingdoms of the world and said: "To you I will give all this authority, and their glory, because it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I want to" (Luke 4:6). And Jesus did not contradict him. However, as a result of Christ's victory with the cross and the resurrection, Satan was demoted. But for His sovereign purposes, God still allows Satan and his demons to function in this world, and it is up to us to stop them: something we can do only by using Christ's power. Further, it appears that the choices that people make do make a difference in what the enemy can do. In a country where the people serve Satan, a boss demon is in control and the demons can act freely. In a country where the people serve God, a boss angel is in control, and the demonic activity is limited.

[2] In 1 Corinthians 11:7 Paul quotes this text with precision. He uses the Greek word meaning 'male', unambiguously. That verse states further that the male is the 'glory' of God, while the woman is the 'glory' of man.

Male and female He created them.[1] **28** And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over everything that creeps upon the ground." **29** And God said, "Listen, I have given you every seed-bearing plant that is on the face of the whole earth, and every tree on which there is seed-bearing fruit: it shall be to you for food. **30** And every green herb shall be for food for every animal of the earth, and for every bird of the air, and for everything that creeps upon the ground, in which there is the breath of life"; and it was so.[2]—**31** And God saw all that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was dusk and dawn, day six.

2:1 Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their 'army.'[3] **2** And on the seventh day God had finished His work which He had made and rested on the seventh day from all his work which He had made. **3** And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work, which God in creating had made.[4]

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[1] The woman was not created on the sixth day, but some time later. Since verses 28 to 30 were addressed to the couple, they must have been spoken after the creation of the woman. The animals and the male were created on the sixth day.

[2] Before the Flood, all animals were herbivorous, and so were humans. It was after the Flood that God authorized the eating of flesh, but not of blood, Genesis 9:3-4.

[3] The Hebrew text literally has 'army', which presumably refers to all the created things mentioned.

[4] The first chapter and these first three verses of the second tell us the sequence of the creation. Starting with verse 4 here, we have vignettes or isolated topics out of sequence. The phrase, "His work which He had made", is repeated three times, emphasizing that it was God himself who did it, and did it directly, in six solar days. Hebrews 1:10, John 1:3,10 and Colossians 1:16 state expressly that of the members of the Trinity, Jehovah the son was the primary agent in the creation of this world. In passing, the Jewish practice of starting

The Beginning re-stated, using the Creator's personal name

2:4 These are the 'generations'[1] of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day[2] that God JEHOVAH[3] made the earth and the heavens.[4]

5 No plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb

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their day at 6:00 p.m. is probably based on the creation account in the first chapter.

[1] The Hebrew text literally has 'generations,' which seems to include both the origin and the later history.

[2] Here 'day' has the meaning of a time period, not of a solar day.

[3] Just like 'Coach Joe', or 'Captain Jim', 'God' works as a title and 'JEHOVAH' as a proper name. This verse introduces and identifies the Creator with His proper name. Before the Masoretes added the vowel pointing, centuries into the Christian era, the Hebrew Text was consonantal, written only with consonants. It turns out that the Masoretes left the Name, YHVH, without this pointing, because in their time the Jews no longer pronounced the Name. When the first half of the Name is used as a prefix to a proper name, such as the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, the first two vowels are always 'e' and 'o'. When the second half is used as a suffix, such as Israel's prime minister, Netanyahu, the last two vowels are always 'a' and 'u'. From this, I deduce that the full Name was YEHOVAHU. By suppressing the last vowel and anglicizing, we are left with JEHOVAH.

In the century before last, the 'higher criticism' of the Bible denied its divine inspiration, even denying the stated authorship of the books. As for the early chapters of Genesis, they claimed that they were a mosaic composed of pieces written by several people. In doing so, they demonstrated ignorance as to the way in which Hebrew discourse works, as well as the way in which language itself functions. The human sound apparatus can only produce one sound at a time. As a result, our communication is necessarily linear. It is impossible to say everything at the same time. It is perfectly normal that the account of creation was given from different perspectives.

[4] With the exception of the first verse (1:1), this is the first time that 'heavens' appears, plural. Being plural, it refers to more than the sky defined by the dome. The celestial luminaries were above the dome, in the second heaven.

of the field had yet sprouted; for God JEHOVAH had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground. **6** (But a mist went up from the earth, and watered the whole surface of the ground.)[1]

7 God JEHOVAH formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.[2] **8** And God JEHOVAH planted a garden in Eden, on the east side;[3] and he put there the man whom he had formed. **9** And God JEHOVAH caused every tree to grow out of the ground, which is pleasant to the sight and good for food; also the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

(10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it was divided into four headwaters. **11** The name of the first [river] was Pishon; it wound through all the land of Havilah, where there was gold. **12** And the gold of this land was good; there was bdellium, and the onyx stone. **13** And the name of the second river was Gihon; it wound through all the land of Cush. **14** And the name of the third river was Hiddekel; it flowed along the east side of Asshur. And the fourth river was Euphrates.**)**[4]

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[1] I understand that verse 6 is an explanatory aside from Moses, who wrote after the Flood. Before the Flood there was no rain, and Moses explains how the plants were watered.

[2] Although birds, fish and insects have life, they do not have soul. We have soul as well as life, but they are intimately related. When a person dies, life and soul leave together.

[3] The Text does not give us the point of reference. But since the surface of the entire earth, including Eden, was destroyed by the Flood, this 'point' would no longer make sense to us. That said, I do not understand the purpose of this information.

[4] The rivers in the world today, after the Flood, are caused by rain, or melting snow. But before the Flood there was no rain; so how could there be a river? As part of the Flood, “the fountains of the great deep were broken up” (7:11), which must refer to reservoirs of water

under the earth's crust. But "broken up" suggests that the water was under pressure, which could result in springs, or even geysers, as happens in our day. Evidently God opened a spring of considerable size to produce the river in Eden. Before the Flood, there may have been an occasional small stream, here and there around the world, but there were no large rivers such as we have today.

This paragraph about the rivers interrupts the flow of the narrative. It could not have been part of what Jehovah shared with Adam as they walked and talked in the Garden. During the 1,650+ years between Creation and the Flood, people were reproducing much faster than they were dying. By the time of the Flood, there must have been many hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of inhabitants on this planet. Once the fallen pair was expelled from the Garden, their descendants would have spread out in all directions. They built towns and gave names to their towns and their areas. I take it that this paragraph about the rivers was included to give some idea of the extent of the human population (before the Flood), including its geographical distribution.

But why are gold, bdellium and onyx mentioned? Well, evidently gold came to be viewed as having special value early on, functioning as a sort of money. Bdellium is a plant with aromatic gum, perhaps a type of cosmetic, indicating that people were already paying attention to that sort of thing. Onyx is a pretty semi-precious stone that would have ornamental value (not useful for building). So this paragraph also mentions the development of cultural values.

Whoever wrote this paragraph would have done so hundreds of years after the Fall. (It would have been part of a document that was preserved in Noah's Ark, along with other pre-flood literature, which was delivered to Moses in due time.) But why was it inserted precisely here, along with the creation of the Garden? Well, where else would it fit? After the fallen pair was expelled, there is only one further mention of the Garden, in Genesis, giving the location of Cain's descendants. In any case, it is where it is, presumably because the Holy Spirit told Moses to put it there.

Noah's Flood totally destroyed the surface of the earth at that time. After the Flood the surface was totally different. That is why it is impossible to know the location of Eden. It would be natural for Noah and his sons to reuse names they had known before; in this

15 And God JEHOVAH took the man and put him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate it and to keep it. **16** And God JEHOVAH commanded the man, saying: "Of every tree of the garden you may eat freely; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die."[1]

18 And God JEHOVAH said: "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper[2] that will correspond to him". **19** And when God JEHOVAH had formed out of the ground all the animals of the field, and all the birds of the air, He brought them to the man, to see what he would call them; and whatever name the man gave to every living creature,

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case the Tigris (Hiddekel) and Euphrates rivers (whose headwaters are not far from Ararat).

[1] But why did God place this tree in the Garden, not to mention the Tree of Life? There had to be a test; John 4:23-4. The Father is "looking for" people who will worship Him in spirit and truth. Perhaps we have a window here into why God created a race like ours – people in His image with the ability to **choose**. God is "seeking" something, which means that He does not have it, at least not automatically, or in sufficient quantity. I understand that He wants to be appreciated for who He is, He wants to be reciprocated, but to have meaning, such appreciation cannot come from robots – it has to be voluntary. So He created a kind of being with that ability, but with that He had to run the risk that such beings would choose not to appreciate Him! Unfortunately, most human beings make the negative choice, and that negative choice carries with it all sorts of negative consequences. From Adam to now, human beings are born with an inclination to sin, so that choosing to appreciate God is not automatic, not in the slightest, nor is it easy. Hence, no one can accuse God of 'buying votes' – He seems to have done just the opposite. If a human being, against his natural inclination, chooses to appreciate God, then He receives what He is seeking. "In spirit and in truth" must mean that it cannot be faked or coerced. Please see Matthew 23:9-10 and 13.

[2] The Hebrew word here means simply someone who helps; of course there are various ways of helping.

that would be its name. **20** And Adam[1] gave names to all the cattle, and to the fowls of the air, and to every animal of the field; but there was not found for Adam a helper that would correspond to him. **21** Then God JEHOVAH caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he fell asleep; and He took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh. **22** And God JEHOVAH transformed the rib which He took from Adam into a woman and brought her to Adam. **23** Then Adam said, "Now this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;[2] she will be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man".[3] **24** Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.[4] **25** And they were both naked, the man and his wife; and they were not ashamed.

The Fall

3:1 Now the serpent[5] was more cunning than every animal of the field that God JEHOVAH had made. And it said to the

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[1] The same Hebrew word means both 'man' and 'Adam', and the choice can be arbitrary. Up to this point I have translated 'the man', although many versions have begun with 'Adam' much earlier. God created Adam as an adult, and evidently put a language in his mind, for otherwise he would not have been able to name the animals.

[2] That was literally the truth; flesh and bone represent the physical body.

[3] The Hebrew word here means a human male and is different from the generic word 'man'; it is also different from just 'male', which can also apply to animals. The feminine equivalent means a human female.

[4] This expression is not poetic language; it is a chemical reality.

[5] The serpent was not yet a snake, crawling on the ground (see verse 14 below). We have no way of knowing what the serpent looked like, but apparently it did not startle the woman, including its ability to speak. Might some animals have been able to speak before the Fall? In the beginning, when the Creator handed over the administration of this planet to Adam, everything was 'good'. But then came the Fall, and the administrator himself was no longer good. How could a fallen

woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from a certain tree of the garden'?" **2** And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; **3** but of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You shall not eat of it, nor touch it,[1] or you will die'". **4** Then the serpent said to the woman, "It is not certain that you will die![2] **5** It is because God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods,[3] knowing good and evil." **6** Then the woman, seeing that the tree was good to eat, and pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to give wisdom;[4] she took of its fruit and ate, and

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administrator govern a perfect creation? Since the creation existed to provide context for man, the Creator lowered the creation to the same level, based on the 'hope' of a future restoration for both man and nature (see Romans 8:19-22). We understand that Satan used the serpent. In Revelation 20:2 "the ancient serpent" is one of Satan's descriptions, and it is presumably a reference to Genesis 3:1.

[1] The woman was not present when God gave this prohibition to Adam, but obviously he transmitted the prohibition to her. Presumably he conveyed the prohibition correctly, since he had not yet fallen, and in that case the woman made an undue addition. Why would she do that?

[2] Satan lied, according to his nature, John 8:44. For human beings, not animals, the essence of death is separation, not annihilation. At physical death the body is separated from the spirit-soul, and at the resurrection they will be reunited: in the case of the saved, the body will be glorified; in the case of the lost, the Bible says nothing about the nature of the body. In spiritual death the spirit is separated from God, the "Father of spirits", Hebrews 12:9 (cf. Numbers 16:22). In order for this separation not to be eternal, it is necessary to believe into Sovereign Jesus.

[3] The Hebrew word translated 'God' is *Elohim*, which is plural. Depending on the context, it can mean 'gods', 'angels' and even 'men'. I chose 'gods', but it can be 'God', as in most versions.

[4] Satan attacked the woman through her soul. If I am not mistaken, in a woman the soul is stronger than the spirit, while in a man the spirit is

gave it to her husband as well, and he ate with her.[1] **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together,[2] and made coverings for themselves.[3]

8 And they heard the voice of God JEHOVAH walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of God JEHOVAH among the trees of the garden. **9** And God JEHOVAH called to Adam, and said to him, "Where are you?"[4] **10** And he said, "I heard your

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stronger than the soul. The most important thing about a woman is not her body, it is her soul.

[1] Here we have a drastically reduced account; certainly much more happened than we have here. 1 Timothy 2:14 states that Adam was not deceived, but the woman was; but in that case Adam ate on purpose, and it was he who plunged the world into ruin, Romans 5:12. Woman was created to help man, not to order him around, but by eating the forbidden fruit she made a command-decision, usurping the man's function. She presented him with a *fait accompli*, putting the man in the worst 'snooker' of all time. What to do? Let her die alone? But in that case, since God had said that it was not good for man to be alone, he would lose a second rib. Then Satan would deceive the second woman, and then he would lose a third rib, and one day he would be left without a chest! Further, God certainly did a good job when he created Eve, she would 'stop any traffic', and Adam did not want to be without her. What happened, happened, and we are left with the consequences.

[2] Why fig-leaves? Were there not bigger, better leaves available? And how did they do the sewing? We are not told.

[3] Before they did not feel shame (2:25), but now they did. The fact that they were naked did not change; what changed was the way they interpreted things. They lost their innocence, and that calamity persists to this day. There was no other human being to see them, but there was God Himself (verses 9-10).

[4] It appears that God was in the habit of walking with Adam in the garden, and naturally they would not walk in silence. It must have been on those walks that God told Adam all about creation (which Adam subsequently wrote down). In order to walk with Adam, God

voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I am naked, and I hid myself". **11** And God said, "Who told you that you were naked?![1] Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **12** Then Adam said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate".[2] **13** And God JEHOVAH said to the woman, "Why have you done this?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate".

14 Then God JEHOVAH said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed will you be more than all cattle, and more than all the animals of the field: you shall move upon your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.[3] **15** And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, namely, between thy seed and her seed;[4] he will bruise thy head,

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had to materialize, which means that the initiative was with Him. He enjoyed that fellowship.

[1] He had always been naked, but now it made a difference.

[2] Alas! The effort to avoid assuming one's own responsibility, one's own guilt, had begun, a perversity that lasts to this day. People will blame the circumstances, other people, whatever, rather than admit that they are responsible for their wrongdoing.

[3] This word was addressed to the animal that Satan used, which turned into a snake. Since there are many types of snakes, the animal here became one of the types. Since that animal had unusual intelligence, it must have collaborated with Satan willingly, which is why it was punished.

[4] The Hebrew Text simply has 'seed' both times, but the 'he' that follows is masculine singular. Here we have a prophecy concerning the Messiah. But how are we to understand the enmity between the serpent and the woman? Since God said "thee", the reference is to Satan. Satan did not like Eve, and after the Fall she would not have liked Satan either, but that enmity would end with her death. I understand that the reference to 'seed' is explanatory, and so I translated, "namely"; the enmity is between the 'seeds'. A snake can have offspring, and we generally do not like snakes, but the 'enmity' referred to is probably different. The Sovereign Creator, while walking on this earth in the body of Jesus, stated that angelic beings in

and you will bruise his heel."[1] **16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply your suffering in your pregnancy; with pain you will give birth to children; and your desire will be for your husband,[2] and he will rule over you."[3] **17** And to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,[4] and have eaten of the tree from which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': the ground will be cursed because of you;[5] with toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. **18** Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. **19** In the sweat of your face you shall eat your bread, until you return to the ground, for you were taken from it; since you are dust, to dust you shall

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Heaven do not procreate (Matthew 22:30, Mark 12:25, Luke 20:36) [the matter of humanoids will be dealt with in chapter six]. So then, what 'seed' could Satan have? In John 8:44 Jesus said that the Pharisees were children of the devil, and 1 John 3:8-10 makes it clear that Satan has many other 'sons'. Explaining the parable of the tares, Jesus said: "the tares are the sons of the malignant one", who is "the devil", Matthew 13:38-39. There is certainly enmity between Satan's servants and God's servants, and nowadays this enmity is becoming more and more obvious.

[1] Hebrews 2:14 states that Jehovah the Son became incarnate on this earth to "abolish" the devil, and he succeeded! See John 12:31 and 16:11, Ephesians 1:20-21, Colossians 2:15, 1 Peter 3:22, and 1 John 4:4. That Jesus went through suffering, because of Satan, is also a fact.

[2] I am not a woman, but I have heard a woman say that it is true.

[3] Feminism rejects this directive. See 1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22-23, Titus 2:5 and 1 Peter 3:1.

[4] Obviously she said something when she offered the fruit to Adam. Perhaps she begged him not to let her die alone. There would have been no need to say anything, if Adam had been with her when she ate.

[5] Paul refers to this in Romans 8:19-22. Nature, poor thing, also suffered for man's sin.

return."[1]

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, for she became the mother of all who live.[2] **21** And God JEHOVAH made tunics of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.[3]

22 Then God JEHOVAH said, "Alas, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; so then, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever"[4]—**23** God JEHOVAH sent him out of the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he had been taken. **24** So He drove out the man, and He placed cherubim on the east side of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword that moved in all directions, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.[5]

The first murder

4:1 And Adam knew[6] Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain. And she said: "I have obtained a man from

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[1] This saying refers to the physical body only; it does not include the soul-spirit.

[2] The Hebrew Text says 'living', meaning human beings. The Hebrew word, '*eve*', has to do with life.

[3] It follows that God is against nudism. Apparently He killed animals, so that He could clothe the couple, setting an example to be followed.

[4] Physical death had begun; and so had spiritual death. For some reason, they had not yet touched that tree.

[5] But why did God place the Tree of Life in the garden? What purpose would it serve? God knew beforehand that man would fall. Perhaps it was to serve as a reason to expel the fallen couple from the garden. Life in the garden was too easy, and they lost that easy life. After the Fall, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil no longer had a function, but the Tree of Life did. Did this Tree represent Christ? Eating of Him would not be possible until 4,000 years later (John 6:53-58). The Flood destroyed the Garden, if it still existed, but was it there intact during the 1,650 years until the Flood? The Bible does not say. If so, protecting the Tree would have been increasingly difficult.

[6] In the Bible, the verb 'to know' is used to refer to sexual intercourse. The Text explicitly says that it was Adam who begot Cain, which disproves other theories.

JEHOVAH." **2** And she gave birth again to his brother Abel. Abel became a shepherd, and Cain became a tiller of the ground. **3** And after a time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering to JEHOVAH of the fruit of the ground. **4** And Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock as well as of their fat; and JEHOVAH accepted Abel and his offering. **5** But he did not accept Cain and his offering.[1] And Cain was furious,[2] and his countenance fell. **6** And JEHOVAH said to Cain: "Why did you become angry? And why has your countenance fallen? **7** If you do well, is it not certain that you will be accepted?[3] But if you do not do well, sin is crouched at the door; its desire is against you,[4] but you should master it."

8 Now Cain would talk with his brother Abel.[5] And it came to pass, while they were in the field, that Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. **9** And JEHOVAH said to Cain: "Where is Abel your brother?" And he said, "I don't know;[6] am I my brother's keeper?" **10** And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. **11** Now therefore you are cursed as to the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your

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[1] Although the Text says nothing about it, God must have given instruction as to the necessity of sacrifice. If Abel brought fat, it was because he killed the animal. Hebrews 11:4 affirms that Abel acted by faith. We are not told just how God did the accepting and rejecting.

[2] Why did he become so furious, to the point of murdering Abel? A great deal more must have happened than is recorded.

[3] In order for God to express Himself in this way, He must have given instruction beforehand.

[4] Sin is presented as having life and will. The fallen nature within us is Satan's natural ally. If we should "master" it, it should be possible to do so. However, due to the pressure exerted by Satan and his culture, for someone without the Holy Spirit it may not be possible.

[5] Cain pretended that everything was fine, so that his brother would not suspect anything.

[6] Cain lied, and lying belongs to Satan. 1 John 3:12 states that Satan got Cain.

brother's blood from your hand. **12** When you till the ground, it will no longer give you its strength.[1] You will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." **13** Then Cain said to JEHOVAH: "My punishment is greater than I can bear.[2] **14** Behold, you have driven me from the face of the earth this day, and I will be hid from your face; and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth: and it will happen that whoever finds me will kill me."[3] **15** But JEHOVAH said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance sevenfold". And JEHOVAH put a mark on Cain, so that anyone who found him would not kill him.[4] **16** And Cain went out from the presence of JEHOVAH,[5] and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east side of Eden.

17 And Cain knew his wife,[6] and she conceived and bore Enoch. And Cain built a city and called the name of the city by the name of his son, Enoch. **18** And to Enoch was born Irad, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael,

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[1] Cain was a tiller of the ground, verse 2, but he lost his job. He was condemned to be a vagabond.

[2] No regret, no remorse. Cain was 100% selfish, thinking only of himself.

[3] Wait a minute! Who was there on the earth at that time who could kill Cain? His brothers, who would not forgive the murder of their brother. (When Abel did not return, they would have gone looking for him and discovered his remains.) 5:4 says that Adam “begot sons and daughters”, and Cain and Abel were presumably grown men at the time of the murder. Adam and Eve were certainly producing children during that time, and Cain must have taken at least one grown sister with him when he left.

[4] We have no way of knowing what that signal would have been. But why did God protect Cain to such an extent? He deserved to die. We are not told why. But Cain had been deceived by Satan (1 John 3:12), just as his mother had been, and God made allowances.

[5] He went out, never to return.

[6] 5:4 says that Adam "begot sons and daughters". Obviously Cain and Seth married sisters. At the beginning there were still no inbred deficiencies; the blood was pure.

and Methushael begot Lamech. **19** And Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah. **20** And Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle.[1] **21** And his brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the harp and the flute. **22** And as for Zillah, she bore Tubal-Cain, a forger of all kinds of tools of brass and iron;[2] and the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.[3] **23** And Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to my words; for I have killed a man for wounding me, and a young man for injuring me. **24** If Cain will be avenged seven times, Lamech will be seventy-seven."[4]

25 And Adam knew his wife again; and she bore a son, and called his name Seth: "For God has granted me another seed

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[1] Since all of Cain's descendants were destroyed by the Flood, why did God have this genealogy recorded? Well, since Cain was the first man begotten on earth, he would deserve some attention. On the other hand, it serves to show that despite Cain's crime, and his punishment, his descendants had a 'normal' life. But why single out the sons of Lamech? During the more than 500 years before Jabal, certainly others used tents, and in the very beginning Abel was already a shepherd. And there were certainly musical instruments before Jubal. I do not understand the use of the word 'father' in this context.

[2] Noah certainly had iron instruments to help in the construction of the Ark, but men had learned to make iron much earlier.

[3] Why mention the sister? She must have stood out in some way.

[4] If it were possible, Lamech was even more selfish than Cain! The way in which Lamech expressed himself leads us to understand that Cain was still alive, which would be natural if he lived as long as his brother, Seth. In the genealogy of Seth there were ten men, including Seth and Shem, until the Flood. In Cain's genealogy we have seven names, including Cain and Jabal. Since this one does not have years, we do not know if it is complete until the Flood. However, it would make little sense to say that Jabal was the 'father' of something if there were no generations after him. Of course, after the Flood there were no more descendants of Cain.

in place of Abel; for Cain killed him." **26** And to Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enos. It was then that they began to call on the name of JEHOVAH.[1]

Seth's genealogy

5:1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. On the day that God created the man, He made him in the likeness of God. **2** He created them male and female and blessed them, and called their name, Man, on the day that they were created. **3** And Adam lived a hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image,[2] and called his name Seth. **4** And the days of Adam, after he begot Seth, were eight hundred years;[3] and he begot sons and daughters. **5** And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.[4]

6 And Seth lived a hundred and five years, and begot Enosh. **7** And after he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years; and he begot sons and daughters. **8** And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

9 And Enosh lived ninety years, and begot Cainan. **10** And after he begot Cainan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen

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[1] Throughout the time of the Old Testament the Name was pronounced. Even Cyrus, king of Persia, pronounced it (Ezra 1:2). Why is it that no one invoked it before? To 'invoke' would be to ask for God's protection or help, thus acknowledging one's own dependence on Him.

[2] A man begets, a woman bears. It is the man who transmits life. Seth was born after Cain murdered Abel (4:25), and they were grown men when that happened, so there was quite an interval between the births of Abel and Seth. Some daughters were certainly born in that interim.

[3] Notice that Adam's age is calculated based on Seth, not the older brothers. Presumably Abel had no son.

[4] Since Adam was created as an adult, with the ability to procreate, that might be worth another seventy years, giving a total of a thousand.

years; and he begot sons and daughters. **11** And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

12 And Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalaleel. **13** And after he begot Mahalaleel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years; and he begot sons and daughters. **14** And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

15 And Mahalaleel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. **16** And after he begot Jared, Mahalaleel lived eight hundred and thirty years; and he begot sons and daughters. **17** And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

18 And Jared lived a hundred and sixty-two years, and begot Enoch. **19** And after he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years; and he begot sons and daughters. **20** And all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

21 And Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. **22** And after he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. **23** And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. **24** And Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him.[1]

25 And Methuselah lived a hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. **26** And after he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years; and he begot sons and daughters. **27** And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.[2]

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[1] Hebrews 9:27 states that we are destined to die once, followed by the judgment. That is, to die physically. So then, Enoch 'is owing' this death, as is Elijah. Could they be the two witnesses (Revelation 11:3)?

[2] Methuselah died in the same year that the Flood came. His son, Lamech, died five years before the Flood.

28 And Lamech lived a hundred and eighty-two years, and begot a son. **29** And he called his name Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us about our work and the toil of our hands,[1] because of the ground that JEHOVAH has cursed." **30** And after he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years; and he begot sons and daughters. **31** And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy and seven years, and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old; and Noah begot Shem,[2] Ham, and Japheth.

The Flood

6:1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, **2** that the sons of God[3] saw that the daughters of men were

[1] Since the Flood destroyed all the antediluvian "works", it appears that Lamech was not a prophet.

[2] According to 11:10, Shem was 98 years old when the Flood came; Noah was 502 when he begot him. Was Japheth two years older than Shem? The Text does not say that he begot sons and daughters, like it does for the others. If he did, they died in the flood. But it is strange that he did not beget until he was 500. If he did have other children, it would have been hard on him and his wife to have lost them all in the flood.

[3] The phrase, "the sons of God", translates the Hebrew phrase, *bene-haelohim*, which in the other places where it occurs – Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7 – clearly refers to angelic beings, and apparently high-ranking ones. The inspired commentary in the New Testament, Jude 6-7 and 2 Peter 2:4-7, makes it clear that they were indeed angelic beings, in this case ones who had rebelled against God. Jude makes it clear that the phrase in Genesis 6:2 is no exception. "And the angels who did not keep their proper domain but deserted their own dwelling [apparently they could not return] He has kept bound in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns—who gave themselves up to fornication and went after a different kind of flesh [Greek ετερος], in a manner similar to those angels—stand as an

beautiful, and they took to themselves wives of all whom they chose. **3** Then JEHOVAH said: "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, because of his sinning;[1] he is flesh.[2] His days will be a hundred and twenty years."[3]

4 In those days there were *Nephilim* on the earth, and also afterward,[4] when the sons of God went in to the daughters

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example, under-going a punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 6-7) [the eternal Lake contains fire and brimstone].

The author, inspired by God, affirms that the people of Sodom did what certain angelic beings did; they wanted sex with a different kind of flesh. Remember that the men of Sodom, old and young, from every neighborhood, wanted to rape the angels who were with Lot (Genesis 19:4-5). Whatever kind of flesh an angel has (when he materializes), it is not human flesh; it is precisely "a different kind of flesh" [Greek ετερος]. The parallel text in 2 Peter 2:4-6 links the crime of those angels to the Flood. (In Matthew 22:30 [Mark 12:25, Luke 20:35-36] the Lord did not say that angels are sexless. Evidently baby angels are not born [whether good or bad], but if angels are of only one gender, they cannot reproduce. In the Bible, whenever an angel materializes, he does so in the form of a man, not a woman.) 1 Corinthians 11:10 is serious.

[1] This saying of the Creator has received a variety of interpretations. I always ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit when translating. I put what I understood.

[2] The Creator recognizes the limitations imposed by fallen flesh.

[3] After the Flood, the age of men gradually decreased, but Moses still lived 120 years, about 500 years later. However, I understand that the intended meaning here is different: God was predicting the Flood, which would destroy everyone except the eight, 120 years from then.

[4] "And also afterward" refers to what happened after the Flood. Obviously, after the Flood there was no longer a 'daughter of Cain', so those three words close the issue against the thesis of the 'sons of Shem'. From Deuteronomy 2:10-12 and 20-21 we can understand that already in the time of Abraham, and even before, other mixed races had emerged, with impressive size. Deuteronomy 3:11 expressly says that Og, king of Bashan, was the last of his race, the *Rephaim*, who were similar to the *Anakim*; and it also says that his bed was about 4.5 meters long, which allows us to imagine that Og himself

of men, and they bore them sons; these were the mighty men of old, men of renown. **5** And JEHOVAH saw that the wickedness of man had multiplied upon the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.[1] **6** Then JEHOVAH lamented that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him in His heart. **7** And JEHOVAH

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was about 4 meters tall. Thirty-eight years earlier the spies, wanting to defame the land, spoke of a number of giants, sons of Anak, who are specifically called *Nephilim* (Numbers 13:33). Four hundred years later, David still had to face Goliath, and others of his race**,** the *Raphaim* (1 Chronicles 20:4-8), except that his height was only three meters, not four (1 Samuel 17:4).

The severity used by God in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah indicates that the level of wickedness there was unusual. Although the text does not directly speak of giants in Sodom, we can deduce that there were, because Deuteronomy 2:10-12 says that Moab, who occupied what was left of the area controlled by Sodom and Gomorrah (which was not under the Dead Sea), took the area from the *Emim* (who were the same size as the *Anakim*) – it appears that there were several mixed races of that type.

[1] This description indicates that something strange had happened. An ordinary human being is certainly capable of doing bad things and perpetrating perverse deeds, but not 100% of the time, unless they are fully surrendered to Satan. But the hybrid offspring, on the other hand, would be totally bad. Just think about it for a moment. According to Jude 18-19, "in the last time" men will be "soulish" [characterized by soul] (Greek ψυχικοι), "not having a spirit". This is what the Text says. Your Bible probably says "not having the Spirit", but in the Text there is no definite article. Further, the description of such people that occupies Jude 8-16 is beyond scathing – it is a totally wicked race; it reminds us of Genesis 6:5 and 2 Timothy 3:1-5. The question is exactly this: would a demon's offspring have a spirit? We know from the Sacred Text that the human spirit is transmitted by the male sperm, so that 'hybrid' race had lost the human spirit, and presumably the 'image of God' as well. Consider the following:

In all genealogies it is always the man who begets; a woman bears. It seems to me that Hebrews 7:9-10 closes the issue. "—in a word, even Levi, who receives tithes, paid the tithe through Abraham,

said: "I will blot out the man whom I have created from the face of the earth: both man and animal, and creeping thing and even birds of the air; because I lament having made them".

8 But Noah found favor in Jehovah's eyes.[1] **9** These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous and upright man among his contemporaries. Noah walked with God. **10** And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. **11** Now the earth was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. **12** And God looked at the earth, and indeed, it was corrupt; for all the people had corrupted their way upon the earth.

13 Then God said to Noah, "The end of every living being has come before me, because the earth is full of violence through them; yes indeed, I will destroy them with the earth.

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because he was still in the reproductive system of his forefather when Melchizedek met him". When Abraham paid the tithe to Melchizedek, not even Isaac had been begotten, much less Jacob and Levi. However, the inspired author states that the person of Levi was in Abraham's reproductive system. So it is the seed of man that transmits life, the human spirit, and the image of the Creator. That is why Romans 5:12-21 teaches that Adam's sin passed on to all his descendants, and death as well. When Eve sinned, she alone sinned; when Adam sinned, we all did.

[1] Dear me; have you ever thought about the results of that 'favor'? Noah had to spend his entire time, during perhaps a hundred years, building an ark to protect his family from something that did not exist! Before the Flood, during 1,600 years, it had never rained; without rain there could be no flood. He was the laughingstock of the surrounding community for all those years. And after the Flood his life was certainly dreary, compared to what he had known before. Would you like to receive a 'favor' like that? However, Noah lived for 350 years after the Flood, and things certainly got a lot better before he died.

14 Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood;[1] you shall make compartments in the ark,[2] and cover it inside and outside with pitch. **15** And this is how you must make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, and its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits.[3] **16** You must make a window in the ark a cubit high, covered on the top;[4] and you must set the door of the ark in its side; you must make it with stories, lower, second, and third. **17** I myself really am bringing a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which there is the breath of life under heaven. Everything on the earth

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[1] 'Gopher' is a transliteration of the Hebrew word, and we are not sure about its meaning. However, a piece of a square beam, about five thousand years old (carbon 14), found near Ararat, is of a type of oak.

[2] There had to be rooms, or pens so that each type of animal could have its own 'space'. This would keep them from roaming around and causing fights; it would also keep them from going after the food. But that meant that the people had to take food and water to the animals, which would give them something to do with all their time.

[3] The dimensions of the ark could be used for a modern ship. However, as the purpose of the ark was only to float, not to navigate, the structure may have been a rectangle, with a flat bottom, which would have given the maximum space for those dimensions (and would be easier to build). Incidentally, the NT refers to Noah's ark, as well as the ark of the covenant, with the Greek word $\kappa\iota\beta\omega\tau\circ\varsigma$ = box, chest (Matthew 24:38; Hebrews 9:4). [The Hebrew word translated 'ark' also means a box or chest.] Both can be square, but they are more commonly rectangular. In fact, we know that the ark of the covenant was indeed a rectangular box. Since the width was much greater than the height, the ark was very stable.

[4] Naturally the ark needed a roof, probably of wood covered with pitch. The 'window' separated the roof from the walls, and ran around the circumference of the entire ark. Since there were no ordinary windows in the 'walls', the larger window was needed to provide air and light inside the ark.

will perish.[1]

18 But with you I will establish my covenant;[2] and you will enter into the ark, you and your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. **19** And of all that lives, of all flesh, two of each kind, you will take into the ark, to preserve them alive with you: they shall be male and female. **20** Of the birds after their kind, of the animals after their kind, and of everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind: two of each will come to you,[3] to keep them alive. **21** And you, take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and store it up for yourself, that it may be for food, for you and for them."[4] **22** Then Noah did according to all that God commanded him; so he did.

7:1 Then JEHOVAH said to Noah: "Come into[5] the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before me in this generation. **2** Of every clean

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[1] Obviously, Jehovah was not talking about a local flood. He spoke of the destruction of the surface of the whole earth. The destruction did not include the fish, since they were at home in the water. It was not necessary to have them in the Ark.

[2] Why did God not just destroy everything and start all over again? Why did He need a 'covenant' with Noah? I suppose that the answer harks back to 3:15; the Redeemer had to be a descendant of Adam and Eve. Noah and Shem carried Adam's genes beyond the Flood.

[3] God brought all the animals to be saved to the ark. It would have been impossible for Noah to go after so many.

[4] Remember that they were all herbivores. God must have given Noah a hint as to how much he should store. Only God knew that they would stay a year in the ark. He probably also brought seeds of the fruits, vegetables, and grains that they liked best, so that they could plant them when they left the ark. The animals would be as if in hibernation, eating relatively little, and producing little manure. As for the larger animals, God may have brought juveniles.

[5] The Hebrew word here can mean, 'go in', 'come in' or even 'take in'. For God to say, "Come in", means that He is there inside and you will be with Him in that place. There are times when God takes us into difficult situations, but He is there with us.

animal you shall take with you seven pairs, male and female; but of animals that are not clean one pair, male and female; **3** also of the birds of the air seven pairs, male and female, to preserve the seed alive on the face of all the earth. **4** For after seven more days[1] I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will blot out every living thing which I have made from off the face of the earth." **5** And Noah did according to all that JEHOVAH had commanded him.

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth. **7** And Noah went into the ark, and with him his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, because of the waters of the flood. **8** And male and female of the clean animals, and of the unclean animals, and of the birds, and of those that creep on the ground, went into the ark with Noah, **9** two by two, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And it came to pass that after the seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth. **11** In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month,[2] on that same day all the fountains of the great deep[3] were broken up, and the windows of the heaven were opened.[4] **12** And there was rain

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[1] God gave Noah advance warning. To take in and settle all those animals would take a little time, as also to get and store all the food.

[2] Why did God make a point of recording the exact day on which the Flood began? Maybe He considers chronology to be important. But it also reinforces the historicity of the account. Only an eyewitness could know that information.

[3] This deep is not the "bottomless pit" of Revelation 9:1-2. It refers to water reservoirs within the earth. If they were 'broken up', they were under pressure.

[4] Why 'windows', plural? Obviously, God did not undo the dome all at once, or all the water would have fallen in a short time, not during 40 days. He undid the dome little by little, here and there, creating 'windows' through which the water fell. But due to the altitude the water was probably frozen, but God did what was necessary for it to

on the earth forty days and forty nights. **13** That same day Noah, and Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, went into the ark, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them: **14** they, and every animal after its kind, and all cattle after their kind, and every creature that creeps upon the ground after its kind, and every bird according to its kind, birds of every kind of wing.[1] **15** Yes, they went into the ark with Noah two by two, of all flesh in which was the breath of life. **16** Male and female of all flesh went in, as God had commanded him; and JEHOVAH shut him in.[2]

17 The flood lasted forty days upon the earth, and the waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it was lifted up above the earth. **18** The waters prevailed, and increased exceedingly upon the earth; and the ark floated upon the waters. **19** And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered.[3] **20** The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upwards, and

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fall. At the end of the 40 days the whole dome had been undone and all the water above it had fallen.

[1] That is what the Text says: "every kind of wing". Certainly there are different types of wings, but why did God make a point of mentioning them?

[2] God closed the door (there was only one). With that, no one else could enter, and those who were inside could not leave.

[3] Again, the language here refers to a global, not local, flood. Modern technology estimates that if all the water in the world's oceans and seas were added together, it would be enough to cover the entire planet with a depth of 3.7 km of water, if the entire surface were solid like a marble. In fact, the presence of a lot of water has always been a characteristic of this earth, since creation. Genesis 1:2 speaks of the "face of the deep" and the "face of the waters". In 1:6-7 God placed a dome (solid and translucent) in the sky and placed half of this water above it. Even so, the half that remained below was so much that God made the dry ground "appear" (1:9), still leaving "seas" (1:10). Verse 11 here in chapter 6 says that "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up", referring to reservoirs of water

the hills were covered. **21** And all flesh that moved upon the earth perished: the birds, the cattle, the wild animals, every creature that creeps upon the ground, and all mankind. **22** Everything that had the breath of the spirit of life[1] in its nostrils, everything that was on the dry land, died. **23** Every living thing that was on the face of the earth was destroyed: both man and animal, creeper and bird of the air; they were blotted out from the earth;[2] and only Noah remained, and

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beneath the earth's crust. And with the destruction of the dome, the water up there returned to the surface. In short, there was a LOT of water! But since there were seas before the flood, although we have no way of knowing how much water they contained, I think it is reasonable to imagine that the water above the surface was at least two km deep.

I believe that before the Flood, the high mountain ranges that we have in the world today did not exist. Since the water covered the highest peaks, they could scarcely be more than 3 km high. When God separated the continents by fissure in the time of Peleg, He must have created the current mountain ranges. In order to make dry land appear again, God dug the basins of the oceans. There are trenches deeper than the height of our highest peak, Mount Everest. He used the material that He dug up to form the continents and the mountains. The Pacific Ocean is said to have an average depth of around 4 km, and it occupies around half of the surface of the globe!

[1] "The spirit of life", that is what the Text says. Life is mysterious, much like an electric current. We cannot see it, but we can feel it and see the effects it produces. Let us think of a body, whether human or of an animal, that is dying. One moment it is alive, the next moment it is dead. The body is the same, but something is gone. It was the spirit of life. Germs have life, plants have life, insects have life, fish have life, birds have life, animals have life, we have life; but it seems that they are different types of life. But how so? The bodies are different, with different abilities, but would not the spirit of life be the same? The Text includes all kinds of beings with nostrils. In passing, it seems to me that only human beings and mammals have a soul, and only human beings have a spirit (of the types mentioned).

[2] It is repeated no less than four times that all life on earth was wiped out. Why so much emphasis on that fact? God knew that later men

those who were with him in the ark. **24** And the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days.

8:1 Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided.[1] **2** The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven had been stopped also, and the rain of heaven had been restrained. **3** And the waters were continually flowing from off the earth; and at the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters had diminished. **4** And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark alighted on the mountains of Ararat.[2] **5** And the waters continued to recede until the tenth month;[3] in the tenth month, on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains appeared.[4]

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would deny the existence of the Flood, inventing various theories. Whoever rejects any clear statement of the Sacred Text will have to answer for it. See 2 Peter 3:3-7.

[1] Certainly there were monster tsunamis that triturated the surface of the earth. That triturated material was turned into sediment, which was deposited. The Grand Canyon in the United States reveals more than two thousand vertical meters of distinct layers of sedimentary rock. There are layers of sedimentary rock all around the world. It is the sedimentary rock that contains all the fossils, so the fossils were produced by Noah's Flood.

[2] Currently the Ararat range has peaks over four thousand meters high (and the Ark is there). Moses wrote this book many centuries after the Flood, as well as after the separation of the continents in the time of Peleg. When the Ark landed, it would hardly have been much more than two km above sea level. God raised the mountain ranges later.

[3] The waters needed to have somewhere to go. I suppose that God was excavating the basins of the oceans to receive the waters.

[4] While Noah certainly made a written record of all that happened, which writings came into Moses' hands, the account here contains information that only God could have known. This information Moses received by inspiration, unless God had given it to Noah first.

6 And it came to pass that at the end of forty days Noah opened the window[1] of the ark which he had made. **7** And he sent out a raven, which went to and fro[2] until the waters were dried up from the earth. **8** He also sent out a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. **9** But the dove found no rest for the sole of its foot and returned unto him into the ark; for the waters were upon the face of all the earth. And he stretched out his hand and took it and brought it to himself into the ark. **10** And he waited yet another seven days and sent the dove out of the ark again. **11** And the dove returned to him in the evening, and indeed, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in its beak. Thus Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. **12** Then he waited another seven days and sent the dove out, but it did not return to him anymore.

13 And it came to pass in the year six hundred and one, in the first month, on the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from off the earth. Then Noah removed the covering[3] of the ark and looked, and indeed the face of the ground was dry. **14** And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month,[4] the land was dry. **15** Then God spoke to Noah[5], saying, **16** "Go out of the ark, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. **17** Bring out with you every living creature that is with you, of all flesh:

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[1] How did that happen? I imagine that the quarters for the family would be on the top story, and probably at one end. Noah may have covered the window around their quarters to keep water from splashing in. He would have a ladder, if it was necessary.

[2] It may have even rested on top of the ark, but it never returned to Noah.

[3] Presumably his covering of the window around his quarters; it could not have been the roof.

[4] That would be May 27th.

[5] Since it was God who closed the door, it must have been He who opened the door, allowing them to leave.

of birds, of cattle and of every creature that creeps upon the ground; and let them abound on the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth." **18** Then Noah went out, and with him his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives. **19** Every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.[1]

20 Then Noah built an altar to JEHOVAH, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.[2] **21** And JEHOVAH smelled the soothing aroma, and JEHOVAH said in his heart:[3] "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, because the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.[4] **22** As long as the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."[5]

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[1] By then there would be enough vegetation for all of them to eat. Presumably God made sure that there would be plenty in the vicinity of the ark. If there was an olive sapling, there probably were saplings of other fruit trees as well. If there was still food in the ark that the people could eat, they had access to it.

[2] Surely God had given instruction regarding the necessity of animal sacrifice – that is why seven pairs of the clean animals were taken into the ark.

[3] Obviously God gave this information to Noah, or to somebody.

[4] That is to say, in a similar fashion. After the Millenium, the planet with its atmosphere will be completely destroyed (2 Peter 3:7, Revelation 21:1).

[5] Before the Flood the world was like a tremendous greenhouse. The water-covered dome distributed the heat more or less evenly over the entire globe; so there was no winter and summer. The world revolved around its axis, producing the days, but it did not oscillate; it began to oscillate after, or during, the Flood, producing the seasons. There is a considerable reserve of petroleum in the Arctic, and petroleum is a fossil fuel; it was made of vegetation, a lot of vegetation, vegetation that no longer exists in the Arctic, and not even nearby. In

A new world, with new rules

9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. **2** And the fear of you, and the dread of you, shall come upon every animal of the earth, and upon every bird of the air. Everything that moves on the earth, and all the fish of the sea, is given into your hands. **3** Everything that moves and lives shall be for your food; I have given you all things, even as the green

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Siberia there is a deposit of fossilized tree trunks, trees that no longer exist in the region, nor nearby. Also in Siberia, frozen mastodons have been found, standing up (the dogs were able to eat the meat), with plants in their mouths that are now to be found only a thousand kilometers to the south. How was it possible to freeze a mastodon standing up, eating, without it having time to swallow? I wasn't there, but I deduce the following. At some point during the 40 days, God turned the globe, that is, the equator, to the north the 23º to the Tropic of Cancer, placing the sun above the Tropic of Capricorn, giving the Antarctic its summer and the Arctic its winter. Depending on the speed with which this was done, it would have generated gigantic tsunamis. (There is a place in the Arctic that has already registered minus 70 degrees Celsius. At minus 50 degrees centigrade, spit turns to ice before reaching the ground.) Then, after placing the sun above Capricorn, God undid the dome above the mastodons and a mass of intense cold descended and froze the animals – if you breathe at minus 50 in a normal way, it freezes the lungs. The water, falling in the form of snow or hail, would bury them without delay.

But how could there be petroleum under the Arctic and frozen mastodons on the surface not very far away? I suppose that God sovereignly did things differently at different places on the globe. Why are there coal deposits in some places, and oil deposits in others? Why is there a Grand Canyon (and a similar one in Mexico) only in Arizona, with its over two vertical km of layers of sedimentary rock, but nowhere else in the world—there are vertical layers of sedimentary rock all over the world, but nowhere near that deep. Just what God did with the mountains is a mystery. And He put distinct species of animals and fowl in different places, also plants. Since none of that could have happened by chance, there must be a sovereign CAUSE. 2 Peter 3:3-7.

herb.[1] 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is,* with its blood.[2] **5** I will surely require the blood of your lives; from the hand of every animal, I will require it, as well as from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother, I will require the life of man. **6** Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made the man in His image.[3] **7** As for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly, and multiply in it."

8 Then God spoke to Noah and his sons with him, saying: **9** "Take heed, I, myself, am establishing my covenant with you, and with your descendants after you, **10** and with every living creature that is with you: of birds and of cattle and of every animal of the earth with you: all that came out of the ark, every animal on earth.[4] **11** Yes, I establish my covenant with you: All flesh will never again be destroyed by the waters of the flood; there will be no more flood to destroy the earth." **12** And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for everlasting generations.[5] **13** I have set my rainbow in the clouds,[6] and it shall be a sign of the covenant

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[1] Before the Flood they could only eat vegetables, but now God adds meat.

[2] Really, it is the circulation of the blood that makes it possible for the body to live and function. Note that God prohibited the ingestion of blood, and that prohibition has never been lifted. Any animal or bird slaughtered for food should be bled.

[3] God here established the maximum penalty for murder, and that penalty has never been revoked. In the Law of Moses there was no mercy for the murderer (Numbers 35:32). The reason given is that the man is the bearer of the image of God.

[4] The animals and birds can certainly see the rainbow, but presumably do not know what it represents.

[5] In other words, until the end of this world.

[6] Since there was no rain before the Flood, there were no rainbows either. The rainbow was a new thing. In recent times Satan's servants have usurped the rainbow, making it represent something else.

between me and the earth. **14** And it shall come to pass, when I bring clouds upon the earth, and the rainbow shall appear in the clouds, **15** then I will remember my covenant between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood, to destroy all flesh.[1] **16** The rainbow will be in the clouds, and I will see it, to remind me[2] of the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." **17** And God said to Noah, "This [the rainbow] is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all the flesh that is on the earth."

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan. **19** These three were the sons of Noah; and the whole earth was populated from them.[3] **20** And Noah began to be a farmer, and planted a vineyard. **21** And he drank of the wine and got drunk;[4]

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[1] Next time it will be by fire.

[2] In order to communicate with us, God must use our language and explain things in a way that we can understand. In order to explain something to a child, you must lower the explanation down to the child's level. However, I find it curious that God said it would remind Him! For us, a rainbow is beautiful, and is a promise, although local floods can still do a lot of damage.

[3] This means that Noah did not beget any more sons after the Flood. He may have had daughters, but the refrain, "and he begot sons and daughters" that occurs from Adam through Lamech, Noah's father, is not repeated for Noah (but it is resumed for Shem through Nahor).

[4] Noah is to be pitied. His world was destroyed, and compared to the old, the new world he saw was dull. There was no one to talk to except his family; there was nothing to do except plant, eat, drink, and sleep. Compared to the old life, the new one was dreary. No wonder he got drunk; it would have been a way to forget reality for a few hours. God chose Noah to 'save' the Plan of salvation, which Satan had almost aborted with the *Nephilim*.

and he became uncovered[1] in his tent. **22** And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw[2] his father's nakedness, and told both his brothers outside. **23** Then Shem and Japheth took a garment and put it on both of their shoulders, and went backwards and covered their father's nakedness; their faces were turned away and they did not notice their father's nakedness. **24** And Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him. **25** And he said, "Cursed be Canaan;[3] he shall be a slave of slaves[4] to his brothers". **26** And he said: "Blessed be JEHOVAH, the God of Shem;[5] and let Canaan be his slave. **27** May God enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his slave." **28** And after the flood Noah lived three hundred and fifty years. **29** And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.

10:1 These are the generations of Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth; sons were born to them after the flood. **2** The sons of Japheth: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal,

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[1] He was naked.

[2] 'To see the nakedness' is a euphemism used in the OT for sexual intercourse; Ham raped his father. That is why Noah reacted so violently. Merely looking would not have deserved such a curse. Someone who is dead drunk will not notice someone looking through the doorway, but he will feel a physical invasion—he may have opened his eyes to see who it was, so he knew.

[3] Wait a minute, it was Ham who sinned, not Canaan. God had already blessed Ham (9:1), and Noah had no authority to annul that blessing. In the Decalogue God Himself visits the sin of the fathers on the children up to the third or fourth generation (Exodus 20:5).

[4] Being a slave of slaves would be as low as one can get.

[5] Hebrews 7:7 says, "Now without dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater". So Noah was not blessing Jehovah. I understand that Shem was blessed because Jehovah was his God, and Noah was 'blessing' that fact. That Jehovah is stated to be Shem's God indicates that His Plan would be executed through Shem and his descendants. That Japheth was to dwell in Shem's tent indicates that Shem was the more prominent.

Meshech and Tyras. **3** And the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah. **4** And the sons of Javan: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim and Dodanim. **5** From these came the coast-land ethnic groups who were separated in their lands, each according to his language,[1] according to his families within his ethnic group. **6** The sons of Ham: Cush, Mizraim, Put and Canaan. **7** And the sons of Cush: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteca. And the sons of Raamah: Sheba and Dedan. **8** And Cush begot Nimrod also; he began to be mighty in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before JEHOVAH;[2] hence the saying: 'Like Nimrod, the mighty hunter before JEHOVAH'. **10** And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.[3] **11** Out of that land Asshur went out, and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah **12** and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah (this was the principal city). **13** And Mitzraim fathered the Ludites, the Anamites, the Lehabites, the Naphtuhites, **14** the Pathrusites, the Casluhites[4] (from whom came the Philistines) and the Caphtorites. **15** And Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and

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[1] All of them were alive when God multiplied the languages in Peleg's time, which caused the scattering of the families.

[2] I confess that I do not understand this statement. The man could really have been a great hunter, but why "before Jehovah"? Well, in Matthew 10:29 Sovereign Jesus said that not even a sparrow can fall without the Father. So then, what Nimrod was doing was not without the Father either.

[3] Nimrod was a grandson of Ham and may have been born around 50 years after the Flood. Being a dominant sort of person, some of his brothers may have gone with him to Shinar. I imagine that the multiplication of the languages happened between 150 and 200 years after the Flood (11:1-9).

[4] All of those names could be translated as proper names, but they all have the suffix meaning 'plural', and they have the definite article, which the proper names do not have.

Heth; **16** and the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, **17** the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, **18** the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite (later the families of the Canaanites were undone).[1] **19** And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, going toward Gerar, unto Gaza; going toward Sodom and Gomorrah, Adma and Zeboiim, unto Lasha. **20** Those were the sons of Ham according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, within their ethnic groups.

21 Now to Shem, the older brother of Japheth,[2] to him was born the father[3] of all the sons of Eber.[4] **22** The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram. **23** And the sons of Aram: Uz,[5] Hul, Gether and Mash. **24** And Arphaxad begot Shelah; and Shelah begot Eber. **25** And to Eber were born two sons: the name of the one was Peleg, because in his days the land was divided,[6] and his brother's name was

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[1] The semantic area of the verb here covers several senses, but I understand that the central sense has to do with destruction. I translated it as a prophecy of the Israelites' conquest of the land of Canaan with Joshua.

[2] The grammar of the Hebrew text here is ambiguous as to which of the brothers was the older; it could even be understood as saying that Eber had a brother named Japheth, which is unlikely. I understand from the larger context that Shem was the oldest (and the translation of the Jewish Publication Society has Shem as the oldest). In any case, Shem was the more prominent of the two.

[3] That "father" was Arphaxad.

[4] I understand that verse 21 serves as an introduction to Shem's genealogy. Shem's genealogy was more important than the others, because the Savior came through Shem. But why was Eber so emphasized? Perhaps because the word 'Hebrew' is based on it, which became the patronymic for the Israelites.

[5] It is possible that Job was a descendant of Uz, Job 1:1.

[6] That is, by fissure, creating the continents. Perhaps it was a little after the multiplication of languages. When God changed the languages, He must have changed the cultures as well, and perhaps He created the different races (different colors) as well. Presumably, the

Joktan. **26** And Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, **27** Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, **28** Obal, Abimael, Sheba, **29** Ophir, Havilah and Jobab; all these were the sons of Joktan. **30** And his dwelling was from Mesha, going toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. **31** Those were the sons of Shem according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, within their ethnic groups.[1] **32** Those were the families of the sons of Noah according to their generations, within their ethnic groups; and from these the ethnic nations of the earth were divided after the Flood.[2]

The earth is divided, by languages and continents

11:1 Now the whole earth had one language[3] and the same objectives. **2** And it came to pass, as they traveled from the

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separation of the continents happened after the main migrations, and with that each continent would have its own ethnic groups.

[1] Each of the three genealogies refers to their families, languages, lands and ethnic groups. The division of the earth by languages and continents (next chapter) happened in the middle of the genealogies, but this record was written centuries later.

[2] The Text emphasizes that they alone survived the Flood.

[3] "The whole earth had one language"; that language was presumably a type of Hebrew. Jude 14 says, "Now even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men". Since I believe that Jude was inspired by the Holy Spirit in writing his letter, then I understand that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, actually did write a prophecy and copies still existed in Jude's day. Note that this affirms the historicity /accuracy of the Genesis genealogy. If Enoch wrote, Adam also wrote, and their writings (and any other pre-flood literature) were preserved in Noah's Ark, becoming available for use by Moses and others later on. If the language spoken before the Flood was a type of Hebrew, as I assume, then Jude could easily read it. (No copies of this prophecy in Hebrew are known today, although Jews are reported to have used one as late as the 13th century A.D.) Job, the first canonical book, is in Hebrew, and that Hebrew has been said to be a bit 'older' than that used by Moses 300 years later. The point is: God certainly knew from the very beginning that in due time He would use Moses to write the Pentateuch, in Hebrew. When He

east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar;[1] and they dwelt there. **3** And each one said to his neighbor, "Come on, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly". They had brick for stone, and pitch for mortar. **4** And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top is like the heavens,[2] and let us make ourselves a name, that we may not be scattered over the face of the whole earth". **5** Then JEHOVAH came down to see the city and the tower that Adam's sons[3] were building. **6** And JEHOVAH said: "Indeed, the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they are beginning with! Now, there will be no restriction on everything they intend to do.[4] **7** Come, let us go down and confound[5] their language there, that they may not understand each other's speech." **8** So JEHOVAH scattered them from there over the face of all the earth; and they stopped building the city. **9** Therefore its name was called Babel, because there JEHOVAH confused the language of all the earth,[6] and JEHOVAH

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multiplied the languages, it is not said that He abandoned the first one. There would be no reason to do so. The logical thing would be to maintain the original language, in which both Adam's and Noah's written accounts were preserved, within the family line that He would later choose and use (thereby avoiding the need to translate).

[1] This brings us back to 10:10; it was Nimrod's people who ended up in Shinar.

[2] With brick and pitch you cannot make a skyscraper; they may have made a drawing on the top of the tower, perhaps representing the zodiac.

[3] That is what the Text says. The Hebrew Text has the definite article with 'man', so I take it that 'the man' refers to Adam.

[4] It is possible that Satan revealed to Nimrod the principles of the workings of the earth. Technological advances could have started already there. Do not the Egyptian pyramids reveal an advanced technology? And they are not alone.

[5] Again, the verbs are in the plural, which harmonizes with the Trinity.

[6] I am a linguist, PhD, and I can say that it is simply impossible that the 7,000 languages spoken today on earth could have evolved from a

scattered them from there over the face of all the earth.[1]

10 These are the generations of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. **11** And after he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years; and begot sons and daughters. **12** And Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. **13** And after he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years; and begot sons and daughters.[2] **14** And Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. **15** And after he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years; and begot sons and daughters. **16** And Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg.[3] **17** And after he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years; and he begot sons and daughters. **18** And Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. **19** And after he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years; and begot sons and

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single mother tongue, absolutely impossible. I do not remember how many linguistic trunks there are in the world, but if there are 100, then God created 100 mother tongues. What God did affected all the inhabitants of the world at that time, not just the inhabitants of Shinar. Families with the same language would have migrated together, forming ethnic groups.

[1] Twice it says, "over the face of all the earth". 'All the earth' does not mean, locally; when God separated the continents, there were people on all of them.

[2] The lack of the dome, which filtered the harmful rays from the sun, was already being felt. Arphaxad lived only half of what people lived before the Flood. Shem had the advantage of having started his life earlier, but he lived much less than his father.

[3] Peleg was born 101 years after the flood and lived for 239 years; so he died 340 years after the Flood. 10:25 indicates that the continents were created during his lifetime. I imagine that the division happened between 250 and 300 years after the Flood, which would give ample time for the migrations after the multiplication of the languages.

daughters.[1] **20** And Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. **21** And after he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years; and begot sons and daughters. **22** And Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. **23** And after he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years; and begot sons and daughters. **24** And Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. **25** And after he begot Terah, Nahor lived a hundred and nineteen years;[2] and begot sons and daughters. **26** And Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran.[3]

27 These are the generations of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begot Lot. **28** And Haran died in the presence of his father Terah, in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldees. **29** And Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah, the daughter of Haran,[4] the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. **30** And Sarai was barren; she had no child. **31** And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and went out with them from Ur of the Chaldees to go into the land of Canaan;[5] and they came to Haran, and dwelt there. **32** And the days of

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[1] With Peleg the average life span was halved again; from then on it gradually decreased. The lack of the dome explains the first division, after the flood, but this division must have been by a sovereign act of God.

[2] Nahor died early.

[3] Abram was the youngest of the three, but was more important for the subsequent history.

[4] Milcah was Lot's sister.

[5] The plan was to go to Canaan, the destination that God had for Abram, but they stopped halfway. That must have been why Terah did not take Nahor, only Abram. We do not have a record of the circumstances of Haran's death, but Terah may have been happy for an excuse to leave Ur. From 24:10 we learn that Nahor followed later.

Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.

God focuses on Abraham

12:1 Now JEHOVAH had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your relatives, and from your father's house,[1] to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. **3** And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you;[2] and all the families of

[1] Abram's obedience was incomplete. He did leave the land, but he took his father (who cost him fifteen years in Haran) and his nephew Lot (who would be a lot of trouble). God sovereignly chose Abram to begin the family and the nation through whom the Messiah, the Savior of the world, would come. But in order for Abram to start a new relationship with Jehovah, He had to get him away from Nahor and Ur. Nahor, Abram's older brother, was presumably sixty years older than Abram, and would become the head of the family when their father died. In 31:30 Laban refers to his "gods", the family idols, which he had inherited from Bethuel, his father, who had inherited them from Nahor. In order to start something new, God had to get Abram out of Ur.

1 Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things happened to them as examples and were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." The following chapters are full of experiences, many of which are negative. I understand that the main lesson God wants to give us with this, is that everything we do has consequences, sometimes in the long run. It is not recorded that Abram consulted God before taking Hagar, and the consequences are with us to this day. It is also true that the experiences illustrate the scope of the Fall, as well as the scope of God's grace and mercy.

[2] Notice that the blessing is plural, while the cursing is singular. "Those who bless" is generic, offering a general principle. "Him who curses" is specific; God will personally curse that person!! It is clear in the context that the "you" includes his descendants; that is made explicit in 22:18. To curse Israel is probably not a good idea!

the earth shall be blessed through you."[1]

4 So Abram departed, as JEHOVAH had spoken to him,[2] and Lot went with him.[3] And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. **5** And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all the goods that they had accumulated, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran;[4] and they went out to go into the land of Canaan. And they came to the land of Canaan. **6** And Abram passed through the land to the place of She-chem, as far as the oak of Moreh;[5] and at that time the Canaanites were in that land. **7** Then JEHOVAH appeared to Abram,[6] and said, "I will give this

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[1] All these promises would be fulfilled in the long run. Abram was 60 years old when he left Ur, but Isaac would not be born until 40 years later, when Abram was 100 years old (God having changed his name to Abraham a year earlier). This first communication that Jehovah gave to Abram was simple, more comprehensive, including the blessing of all the families of the earth. In 22:18 Jehovah makes clear that the blessing will come through his descendants. Indeed, as Paul wrote in Romans 3:2, "the oracles of God were entrusted" to the Jews. The book of Job was written before there was a Jew, properly speaking, but all the rest of the Old Testament, and it is to it that Paul refers, was written by Jews. By the way, all of the books of the New Testament were also written by Jews (with the exception of the two books by Luke). "The Oracles of God" are the written Revelation given by God to the human race. Even more important, the Messiah, the Savior of the world, was a descendant of Abraham. There is no greater blessing than Salvation.

[2] Fifteen years earlier!

[3] Abram should not have taken Lot with him. Aside from the trouble Lot caused, if he had stayed in Haran, or even in Ur, he would not have produced the Moabites and Ammonites, who were always a negative presence in the land.

[4] As we will see later, that was probably around 1,000 people!

[5] I find that to be curious; that tree must have been impressive.

[6] Jehovah had already spoken to Abram (12:1), but here, once he was finally, after fifteen years, in the promised land, Jehovah appeared to

land to your descendants". And there he built an altar to JEHOVAH, who had appeared to him.[1] **8** And he moved from there to a mountain east of Bethel, and pitched his tent with Bethel on the west, and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to JEHOVAH and called on the name of JEHOVAH.[2] **9** Then Abram journeyed, going toward the south.

10 And there was a famine in that land, and because the famine was severe, Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there. **11** And it came to pass, when he was about to enter Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife: "Indeed I know that you are a woman beautiful to look at. **12** And it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife', and they will kill me, but keep you alive. **13** Please say that you are my sister,[3] that it may go well with me for your sake, and my soul may live because of you." **14** And it came to pass, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. **15** And Pharaoh's princes saw her,

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him. God materialized in some way that Abram could see him; this enabled Abram to recognize Him on future occasions.

[1] If he built an altar, we may reasonably deduce that he bought a plot "from the sons of Hamor of Shechem" (Acts 7:16). For a fuller discussion, please see my article, 'Who bought what from whom, and where?' in the Appendix.

[2] Because the name represents the person, Abram placed himself under Jehovah's authority and protection. And in Egypt Jehovah did indeed protect him.

[3] In fact, she was his half-sister, daughter of the same father, but another mother (Genesis 20:12), but the intention was to deceive the Egyptians. If on the one hand it was cowardice on Abram's part, on the other hand, for at least twenty years, Sarai had not become pregnant, she was barren, which was a shame for her, and a disappointment for him—the fact that she was beautiful did not give her children. Notice that Abram was assuming that she would in fact be taken! So why did he go to Egypt, expecting to lose his wife? If it was because of the famine, he would soon be sent right back; and since Abram survived, he would have survived if he hadn't gone to Egypt.

and praised her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. **16** And he treated Abram well for her sake; and he gained sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female slaves, female donkeys and camels. **17** But JEHOVAH plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife.[1] **18** Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this that you have done to me? Why didn't you tell me that she was your wife? **19** Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? That is why I took her to be my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife, take her and go!" **20** And Pharaoh gave orders to his men concerning him, and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.[2]

13:1 Then Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him. **2** And Abram was very rich in cattle, silver, and gold. **3** And he made his way from the Negev to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai; **4** to the place of the altar which he had made there before; and Abram called upon the name of JEHOVAH there.

5 Now Lot, who was going with Abram, also had flocks,

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[1] We do not know what the plagues were, nor how God made Pharaoh know what the problem was. Also, it all happened within a short time, before Pharaoh slept with Sarai.

[2] Dear me, what a sad story! Was Abram a "blessing" in Egypt? Poor Pharaoh was not to blame, he was deceived. Abram got an earful, but he also became rich. But if Pharaoh was not to blame, why did God punish him so severely? I understand that God was protecting Sarai; He did not allow her to be defiled, nor to stay in Egypt, because the Messiah would come through her, and she had not yet given birth to Isaac, whose father had to be Abram. Usually God lets us act freely, taking the consequences, but when it is necessary to protect the Plan, He intervenes sovereignly.

cattle, and tents.[1] **6** And the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together; for their goods were so great that they could not dwell together. **7** And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle; and at that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites dwelt in that land.[2] **8** Then Abram said to Lot: "Please let there be no contention between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers. **9** Is not the whole land before you? Well then, separate from me; if you go to the left, I will go to the right; or if you go to the right, I will go to the left."[3] **10** And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the plain of the Jordan, that it was all well-watered (before JEHOVAH destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah), even as the garden of JEHOVAH,[4] as the land of Egypt, going toward Zoar.[5] **11** Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed east, and they separated from each other. **12** Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom.[6] **13** Now the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners

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[1] He had inherited all that from his father before he left Ur, except that it all had doubtless increased during the fifteen years in Haran. The "tents" presumably refers to people.

[2] In other words, the land was not empty, and there would be competition for its use.

[3] Abram offering the choice to Lot was noble and generous, and since Lot was selfish and self-centered, he accepted. And he chose exactly what seemed to be the most privileged area of the region.

[4] The expression is probably poetic, evoking a very pleasant place. The garden of Eden no longer existed, and no one living at that time would know what it was like.

[5] Zoar was not far from Sodom, unless this was a second one somewhere in Egypt. The reference to Egypt probably referred to Goshen, which was well-watered.

[6] Did Lot know nothing of the nature of Sodom? It seems that Sodom was the most important city, politically.

against JEHOVAH—exceedingly.[1]

14 After Lot parted from him,[2] JEHOVAH said to Abram: "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are—to the north, to the south, to the east and to the west. **15** For all the land which you see I will give to you, and to your descendants, forever.[3] **16** And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, your descendants also could be numbered. **17** Arise, walk through the land, in its length and in its breadth; for to you I will give it."[4] **18** Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre,[5] which are in Hebron; and he built an altar there to JEHOVAH.[6]

Abram delivers Lot from captivity

14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goyim, **2** that they made war with Bera king of Sodom, with Birsha king of Gomorrah, with Shinab king of Admah, with Shemeber king of Zeboim, and with the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). **3** All these gathered together in the valley

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[1] Why does the Text say that they were “sinners against JEHOVAH” and “exceedingly”? Of course, all sin is against Jehovah, but they were especially bad. Their appetite for anal sex did not stop at angelic beings, and there were probably *Nephilim* among them.

[2] Finally, Abram was entirely freed from his kindred, which was part of the first command that God gave him, and God renewed the promise in much more detail.

[3] "Forever"—it seems that in God's mind the land of Canaan belongs to Israel, always, even when not occupied or controlled by it.

[4] We have no record that Abram obeyed this command to go through the land.

[5] Why are the oak trees emphasized? Well, they did all their cooking with wood, and oak wood is good firewood.

[6] This was the third altar that Abram built to Jehovah. He was leaving his 'mark' on the land.

of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).[1] **4** For they had served Chedorlaomer twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came, and struck the *Rephaim* in Ashteroth-karnaim, the *Zuzim* in Ham, the *Emim* in Shaveh-kiriathaim[2] **6** and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. **7** Then they returned and came to En-mishpat (which is Kadesh), and struck all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar.[3] **8** Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they set the battle in array against them in the valley of Siddim, **9** against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar: four kings against five. **10** Now the valley of Siddim was full of asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; some fell there, and the rest fled to a mountain. **11** And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their food, and departed. **12** They also took Lot the son of Abram's brother, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13 But one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew,[4] who dwelt by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite,

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[1] The 'Salt Sea', or Dead Sea, was the result of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and did not yet exist at that time; but Moses, writing centuries later, gives this clarification.

[2] Those three races were hybrid races, like the *Nephilim*.

[3] Why did the Holy Spirit lead Moses to record the names of peoples and places in such detail and precision? What sense would it make, or difference would it make centuries later? Because God's written Revelation has always been a historical and true record, not a 'religious book'.

[4] This is the first occurrence of the word 'Hebrew', which became the patronymic of Abraham and his descendants.

Eshcol's brother, and Aner's brother; they were Abram's allies. **14** And when Abram heard that his brother[1] was taken captive, he led out his three hundred and eighteen trained men, born in his house,[2] and went in pursuit as far as Dan.[3] **15** Then he divided his servants and attacked them by night, and smote them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is on the left side of Damascus.[4] **16** And he brought back all the goods, and also brought his brother Lot, with his goods, as well as the women and the people.[5]

17 And when Abram had returned, after striking Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him,[6] at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's valley. **18** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought bread and wine;[7] and he was priest of the Most-High God. **19** And

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[1] The term is used *lato sensu*, Lot being his nephew, but it is likely that they felt like brothers, being of the same age, more or less, and having been raised together.

[2] This is impressive. If they were "born in his house", they were not mercenaries. With women and children, and old men, the community that Abram led probably numbered over a thousand people. That was a lot of people! On the other hand, with so many men capable of war, taking action against him would be risky.

[3] Abram did not stay at home; he commanded the operation.

[4] Since they were heading north, the left would be the west side.

[5] Now it is obvious that God helped Abram, because the four kings would have many more men than Abram. Hebron was only about forty km from Salem (Jerusalem). Did Abram know nothing of Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of the Most-High God? I imagine that Abram had asked God's blessing through Melchizedek, which is why he tithed. It is also obvious that Abram's interest was to rescue Lot, not the others. And God helped Abram, even though He knew what would happen to Lot later. Perhaps God was giving Lot one last chance to correct his life; he should have left Sodom.

[6] The king of Sodom had not been taken prisoner.

[7] What was Melchizedek doing so far from Jerusalem? How did he know when and where Abram was coming? I do not doubt that there was supernatural involvement.

he blessed him, and said: "Blessed be Abram by the Most-High God, Owner of heaven and earth. **20** And blessed be the Most-High God, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And *Abram* gave him a tenth of everything.[1] **21** Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and take the goods for yourself". **22** But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to JEHOVAH, the Most-High God, Owner of heaven and earth,[2] **23** that I will not take from a thread to a sandal-strap, or anything that is yours; lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'[3]–**24** nothing for me; only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men that went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre;[4] let them take their portion."

God and Abram

15:1 After these things the word of JEHOVAH came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be exceedingly great."[5] **2** Then Abram said,

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[1] Hebrews 7:1-7 gives us an inspired commentary on this meeting between Melchizedek and Abram. The figure of Melchizedek is a bit of a mystery. Since he is "priest of the Most-High", how is it that such an office has never been spoken of before? And how is it that Abram submitted to him without objection? And where did the idea of 'tithing' come from? If Melchizedek was a manifestation of Jehovah, who had appeared to Abram before, then Abram's attitude was natural. Hebrews 7:7 – "Now without dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater". Melchizedek was greater than Abram.

[2] Abram repeats the titles of God given by Melchizedek, but adds His name, Jehovah; but he had raised his hand before leaving. He had certainly asked for God's help.

[3] Abram was already very rich, and he did not need the spoil. Further, anything from Sodom would be contaminated by the utterly wicked life of the inhabitants and would do no good.

[4] We are not told how many fighting men they had, but they would be added to Abram's 318.

[5] Would such a reward be in Heaven? Here on earth Abraham was already very rich, and he appeals to the fact that he has no son.

"Lord JEHOVAH, what will you give me, since I am still childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** Then Abram said, "Really, You have given me no descendant; indeed, one born in my house will be my heir!" **4** Then the word of JEHOVAH came to him, saying, "This one will not be your heir; but he who will come out of your own body, he shall be your heir". **5** Then He took him outside,[1] and said, "Look now toward the heavens and count the stars,[2] if you are able to count them". And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be". **6** And he believed in JEHOVAH, and He reckoned it to him for righteousness.[3]

7 Then He said to him, "I am JEHOVAH, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it". **8** And he said, "My Lord JEHOVAH, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?"[4] **9** And He said unto him, "Bring me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon". **10** So he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and he placed each half opposite the other;[5] but he did not divide the birds. **11** And the birds of prey came down on the carcasses, and Abram drove them

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[1] To take him out, God had to be there. In the first verse God used a vision, but from verse four on, He was present.

[2] To see the stars, it had to be at night.

[3] Well, that took some believing! God kept telling him that his descendants would be uncountable, but he had no son.

[4] Verse 6 says he believed, but here he asks for confirmation. The cruel truth was that he was still childless. In verses 13 to 16 God gives a more detailed answer. Abraham questioned God, and He answered, but the experience was not pleasant.

[5] Separating the front half from the back half would be easier than splitting the carcass from end to end. Presumably God had told him to kill the animals in that way. They were not burned, so it was not a normal offering.

away.[1]

12 And it happened, when the sun was going down, that a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, a terrible and dense dark-ness fell upon him.[2] **13** Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs—and will be enslaved and mis-treated—for four hundred years.[3] **14** But I also will judge the nation whom they will serve;[4] and afterward they will come out with great wealth.[5] **15** And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age.[6] **16** And in the fourth generation they shall return here;[7] for the measure of

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[1] This all happened during the day, presumably the immediately following one.

[2] The prophecy he was about to receive was also dark, but evidently that was an unusual darkness; a very unpleasant one.

[3] This verse should be understood as a chiasmus, a common structure in the Bible:

A. your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs
B. and will be enslaved
B. and mistreated
A. for four hundred years.

A careful comparison of the relevant passages shows that the 400 years include from Isaac's weaning to the exodus (1891 to 1491 B.C.). Since Jacob moved to Egypt in 1706, Abraham's descendants were foreigners in Canaan for 185 years, and then were foreigners in Egypt (where they were enslaved) for 215 years. The exodus occurred 144 years after Joseph's death, so the period of slave labor must have been somewhat less, perhaps around 100 years. (I owe the analysis given above to Dr. Floyd N. Jones.)

[4] Indeed, God punished Egypt with some severity.

[5] Exodus 12:35-36 records that they plundered the Egyptians, taking away a lot of wealth.

[6] In fact, he died peacefully at the age of 175, Genesis 25:7-8.

[7] Verse 15 recounts Abraham's death; So the "fourth generation" of verse 16 must be reckoned after that death. Jacob was born well before his grandfather's death, and therefore the calculation must begin with a son of his. I understand that the four generations were:

the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."[1] **17** And it came to pass, when the sun had set and it was dark, that behold, a smoking portable stove and a torch of fire that passed between those halves![2] **18** That same day JEHOVAH made a covenant with Abram, saying: "I have given this land to your

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Levi (lived 137 years), Kohath (lived 133 years), Amram (lived 137 years) and Moses (lived 120 years) (Exodus 6:16-20). Only these first three are given a record of the years they lived (in Exodus 6), which was certainly on purpose.

[1] Alas, this statement leaves me melancholy. Is there a 'measure of wicked-ness' for every evildoer? Do countries have this measure? A congress that has already filled barrels with corruption–is there no point in praying against it? Notice that God Himself declared that the measure was not full, meaning that He knew the point at which it would be, and He would not shorten the interval. It is Sovereignty in action. The Amorites were descendants of Canaan, whom Noah had cursed. Perhaps the curse resulted in a certain measure of iniquity. Exodus 20:5 says that God Himself "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation". Does God determine a 'measure' for the iniquity? I confess that I would like to understand this subject better, but to this day I have not found a better explanation.

[2] We are not told what the purpose of the stove and torch may have been. For that matter, we are not told the purpose of the whole procedure. However, I asked the Holy Spirit to illumine me about the episode, and this is what came to me. The animals represent projects that we undertake on behalf of Christ's Kingdom (like sacrifices). The heifer stands for big ones, the goat and ram for middle-sized ones, and the birds for small ones. Any three-year-old animal is mature, full-grown, so the projects are in effect. The buzzards represent Satan's servants, who work to contaminate and diminish what we have achieved, and like Abraham, we have to keep alert to try to stop them. Then there are times when God puts us in the dark, without explanation, which is very unpleasant! Isaiah 50:10-11 refers to this. The stove will burn some of the contamination, and the torch will expose the extent of the damage: they are things that God does. That is what came to me. It serves as an application, if no more.

descendants, from the river of Egypt[1] to the great river, the River Euphrates;[2] **19** including the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, **20** the Hittite, the Perizzite, the *Rephaim*, **21** the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite, and the Jebusite."[3]

Hagar

16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian slave girl, whose name was Hagar.[4] **2** And Sarai said to Abram, "Indeed, JEHOVAH has kept me from bearing;[5] please go in to my slave girl, maybe I can build a family through her." And Abram listened to Sarai. **3** So Sarai, Abram's wife, took her slave girl Hagar, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife; Abram had been living in the land of Canaan for ten years.[6] **4** And he went

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[1] This river was not the Nile, but a stream south of Gaza.

[2] As far as we know, the people of Israel never occupied this entire area; not to the Euphrates. Is it a reference to the Millennial Messianic Kingdom? Until then God had promised Canaan, but now He increases the size.

[3] That was ten ethnic groups, one of which was hybrid. It was the land that those groups occupied that God gave.

[4] 12:16 says that Pharaoh gave Abram female slaves, and Hagar was probably one of them. If Abram had not gone to Egypt, they would not have had Hagar to deal with.

[5] It had been 25 years since they left Ur, and we do not know how many years they had been married when they left. What is certain is that Sarai had lost any hope of having a child. She introduced Jehovah into the question, saying that He was responsible for her not having a child. In that case, was she going against God's will by offering Hagar?

[6] Abram was already 85 years old. Romans 4:19 states that Abraham "did not consider his own body, already dead (being about a hundred years old)." Paul declares that Abraham had become impotent before he fathered Isaac. This means that he had gone into decline much earlier, and no one would know that better than Sarai. Perhaps that is the explanation for why she offered Hagar–she knew of the Promise and that Abram needed a descendant. Until that moment, God had not revealed that the mother would be Sarah herself, only that

in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became despised in her eyes.[1] **5** Then Sarai said to Abram: "My grievance be upon you! I gave my slave girl into your arms; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes; may JEHOVAH judge between you and me!"[2] **6** So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed, your slave girl is in your hand; do to her what is good in your eyes". Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she fled from her face.

7 And the Angel of JEHOVAH[3] found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. **8** And He said, "Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" And she said, "I am running away from the face of my mistress Sarai".[4] **9** Then the Angel of JEHOVAH said to her, "Return to your mistress, and submit yourself under her hand".[5] **10** The Angel of JEHOVAH continued, "I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they will not be numbered for multitude." **11** And the Angel

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Abram would have a son. It was when he was 99 years old that God changed his name to Abraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. And it was only then that God revealed that it would be Sarah who would give birth to the son of the Promise. (In passing, God revived Abraham to such good effect that he later fathered six sons with Keturah!)

[1] But that was perfectly predictable.

[2] How so? It was she who asked Abram to take the slave girl. It seems that she was blaming Abram for having accepted the proposal. On the other hand, we are not told that Abram sought to know God's will for the case. If he had, surely God would have said not to do it, thus avoiding the negative consequences, that last until our days.

[3] This is the first mention of the Angel of Jehovah, who was Jehovah Himself.

[4] She didn't say where she was going, probably because she didn't know. It is not said that she was afraid or uncomfortable; she answered normally.

[5] Why did God send her back? Well, she was carrying Abram's son. Notice that God reminded her that she was a slave.

of JEHOVAH said to her: "Indeed, you are with child, and you will give birth to a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael;[1] because JEHOVAH has considered your affliction.[2] **12** And he shall be a wild-donkey of a man: his hand shall be against everyone, and the hand of everyone against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brothers."[3] **13** And she called the name of JEHOVAH, who spoke to her, 'You are the God who sees'; for she said, “Have I also looked upon Him who sees me?”[4] **14** That is why the well was called *Beer-lahai-roi*;[5] indeed, it is between Kadesh and Bered. **15** And Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael.[6] **16** And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

Circumcision becomes the sign of the Covenant

17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, JEHOVAH appeared to Abram and said to him: "I am Almighty God;[7] walk in my presence and be blameless. **2** And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."[8] **3** Then Abram fell on his face, and God spoke with him, saying: **4** "As for me, indeed, my covenant is with

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[1] The name means: God hears.

[2] What affliction? Well, it wasn’t her fault that she was a slave, nor that she had been given to Abram. She had been given to him precisely to bear children.

[3] Why does it say "all" the brothers; Isaac was only one. Abraham had six sons by Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2).

[4] The Text does not say that the Angel appeared to her, but the way in which she expressed herself gives the idea that she saw something.

[5] The name means: the well of him who lives and sees me.

[6] God Himself had given that name to Hagar, and she must have told Abram.

[7] The name in Hebrew is *El Shaddai*.

[8] But why did God each time emphasize the numerous offspring? Well, at that time, what was the reason for living? Was it just existing, living well? The main objective was to leave descendants.

you, and you will be a father of many nations; **5** And your name shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham[1]; for I have made you the father of many nations.[2] **6** And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out from you. **7** And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your descendants after you throughout their generations, by an everlasting covenant, to be God to you, and to your descendants after you. **8** And I will give to you, and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession;[3] and I will be their God."[4]

9 Then God said to Abraham:[5] "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. **10** This is my covenant which you must keep, between me and you[6] and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised.[7] **11** You [pl] shall

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[1] The name means: father of a multitude.

[2] God used the past tense because He had already determined what He said.

[3] In 15:18 God promised the area up to the Euphrates River, but here He returns to the land of Canaan. “Everlasting” presumably means until the end of this world.

[4] The reason for the covenant was to be their God. But since every covenant has two sides, to effectively receive God's blessing depends on our behavior. And it is possible to change gods, as some have done.

[5] From here the new name is used: Abraham.

[6] This pronoun is plural rather than singular. It would include Ishmael and the other males who were part of Abraham's household at that time, of which there were hundreds.

[7] Circumcision was the symbol of the covenant, which was perpetual. God said, "You must keep," so that the obligation of Abraham's descendants to circumcise their sons will never end. This is what verse 13 says: "My covenant in your flesh is an everlasting covenant." That means that God’s commitment to those descendants also will

be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, which shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. **12** The eight-day-old son among you shall be circumcised,[1] every male in your generations, whether he is born in your house or bought for money from any foreigner, who is not your descendant. **13** He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised; my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. **14** And an uncircumcised male, whose flesh of the foreskin is not circumcised, his soul shall be cut off from his people;[2] he has broken my covenant."

15 God also said to Abraham: "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah will be her name.[3] **16** For I will bless her and also give you a son by her; indeed, I have blessed her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall be from her." **17** Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart: "Will a son be born to a hundred-year-old man?[4] And will Sarah give birth at the age of ninety?" **18** And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!"[5] **19** And God said: "Sarah your wife

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never end. Now then, does that also apply to non-Jews who are circumcised? Even in our day?

[1] "Eight days" – two different blood-clotting agents, vitamin K and prothrombin, reach their highest level in the blood (110% of normal) on a person's eighth day, so that is the best day of a lifetime for minor surgery. 4,000 years ago, who but the Creator knew this when He determined the procedure for Abraham? It was not a sadistic procedure, as if God liked to see a baby suffer. It was a matter of hygiene and health; a woman with a circumcised husband does not get cervical cancer.

[2] This expression seems to indicate the death penalty.

[3] The name means: princess.

[4] At that time, men were still procreating at well over 100 years old, but Abraham had already lost this ability (Romans 4:19).

[5] Abraham had affection for Ishmael, and in effect was asking that he be the son of the Promise.

will surely bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac;[1] I will establish my covenant with him and with his descendants after him, for an everlasting covenant. **20** And as for Ishmael, I have heard you; indeed, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; he shall beget twelve chiefs, and I will make him a great nation. **21** But it is with Isaac that I will establish my covenant, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time, next year." **22** When God had finished talking with Abraham, He ascended.

23 Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the people of Abraham's house; and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin that very day, just as God had said to him. **24** Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. **25** And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. **26** Abraham and Ishmael his son were circumcised on the same day. **27** And all the males of his household, those born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.[2]

Abraham saves Lot's life

18:1 Then JEHOVAH appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day. **2** And he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men standing near him. And when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. **3** And he said: "My Lord,[3] if I have now found favor in your sight, I beg you not to pass on from your [sg] servant. **4** Please, let a little water be brought, and wash your [pl] feet,

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[1] The name means: he laughs.

[2] This time Abraham obeyed completely. The men would be unable to fight for three or four days, but God doubtless protected them.

[3] Since Jehovah had already appeared to him, Abraham recognized Him and addressed Him.

and rest under the tree. **5** And I will bring you a morsel of bread to refresh your heart; that is why you have come to your servant; then you may pass on." And they said, "Do so, as you have said". **6** So Abraham ran into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Hurry, knead three measures of fine flour, and make cakes!" **7** Then Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, and gave it to a young man, who hastened to prepare it. **8** And he took curds and milk, and the veal which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree; and they ate.[1]

9 And they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "There in the tent." **10** And He said,[2] "I will certainly return to you according to the time of life;[3] and indeed, Sarah your wife shall bear a son". (And Sarah was listening at the door of the tent behind him.[4]) **11** Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well advanced in age; the custom of women had ceased for Sarah.[5] **12** And Sarah laughed within herself, saying, "Being old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?" **13** And JEHOVAH said to Abraham: "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Indeed, will I really bear, I who am old?' **14** Is anything too hard for JEHOVAH? At the appointed time[6] I will return to

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[1] They were Jehovah the Son and two angels, materialized. They ate without needing food. Why? I suppose it went along with pretending to be men.

[2] In verse 9 the verb is plural, but here it changes to singular. It is Jehovah who speaks (verse 13).

[3] The phrase "the time of life" presumably refers to the nine months of gestation, although we do not know if it took longer at that time, since people also lived longer.

[4] Of course she would! She wanted to know what was going on, and Jehovah spoke loudly enough so that she could hear—He knew that she was listening.

[5] Her menopause was already history.

[6] "Appointed" by whom? By God.

you,[1] according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." **15** And Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh", because she was afraid; and He said, "No, you really did laugh!"[2]

16 Then the men got up to leave and started out toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to guide them.[3] **17** And JEHOVAH said: "Shall I conceal from Abraham what I am doing, **18** since Abraham will certainly become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him? **19** For I have known him,[4] in order that he may command his sons and his household after him, to keep the way of JEHOVAH, to practice righteousness and justice; that JEHOVAH may bring upon Abraham what he has spoken about him."[5] **20** Then JEHOVAH said: "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous,[6] **21** I will go down now[7] and see if indeed they have

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[1] Why did God have to 'return'? Perhaps He was affirming His involvement in the pregnancy, from beginning to end.

[2] I find this to be curious; what did it matter to Jehovah that Sarah laughed? It did give Him the occasion for making an important statement: "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?"

[3] This was presumably just a pretext for going along, since they certainly did not need help to find the way. Abraham knew that something serious was going to happen. When Jehovah shows up, it is serious!!

[4] To know in the sense of recognizing, or choosing.

[5] This is interesting. Jehovah spoke out loud for Abraham to hear. And why would he do that? Presumably to get Abraham to make the intercession that he did. God could have remained silent, and Abraham would not have known anything. God knew He was going to save Lot. As for the content of verse 19, each individual must "keep the way of Jehovah" in order to receive the declared blessings.

[6] Chapter 19 clarifies that this sin was anal sex–the men even wanted to rape the angels!

[7] When the Text says that God 'descends', it is because He will act sovereignly. Abraham understood that judgment had already been determined, and he wanted to save Lot.

done according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know it."[1]

22 Then the men departed from there and went toward Sodom; but Abraham still stood before JEHOVAH. **23** Then Abraham spoke up and said: "Would you actually destroy the righteous with the wicked? **24** If perchance there be fifty righteous within the city, would you destroy it even so, and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are within it? **25** Far be it from you that you should do such a thing, to kill the righteous with the wicked; so that the righteous should be like the wicked; far be it from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is right?"[2] **26** Then JEHOVAH said, "If I find fifty righteous people within the city[3] of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake". **27** Then Abraham answered and said: "Indeed now, I, dust and ashes, have presumed to speak to the Lord. **28** If five righteous are lacking from the fifty, would you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And He said, "If I find forty-five there, I will not destroy". **29** And he spoke to Him yet again, and said, "And if forty be found there?" And He said, "I will not do it for the sake of forty". **30** And he said, "Please, my Lord, do not be angry because I speak, 'If thirty be found there?'" And He said, "I will not do it if I find thirty there". **31** And he said, " Indeed now, I have presumed to speak to the Lord, 'If twenty be found there?'" And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake

[1] But He already knew the answer. The way He expressed Himself was part of the reason why He promoted this encounter with Abraham.

[2] "The Judge of all the earth" could only be Jehovah Himself. Abraham knew who He was. In John 5:22 sovereign Jesus declared that the Father had committed all judging to the Son, so this was Jehovah the Son. Who did Abraham think that he was, wanting to teach God about justice!? Since that was exactly what God had foreseen, it worked out.

[3] It had to be within the city.

of the twenty". **32** Then he said, "Please, my Lord, do not be angry because I speak just once more, 'If ten be found there?'"[1] And He said, "I will not destroy for the sake of the ten". **33** And when JEHOVAH had finished speaking with Abraham, He departed; and Abraham returned to his place.

19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom.[2] When Lot saw them, he rose up to meet them, and bowed his face to the earth.[3] **2** And he said, "Indeed, my lords, please come into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, we will spend the night in the square". **3** But he insisted with them strongly;[4] so they went with him and entered his house. And he made them a meal, baking unleavened bread, and they ate.[5]

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city surrounded the house, the men of Sodom, both young and old,

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[1] Why did Abraham insist until he reached ten? 19:14 mentions "his sons-in-law", plural, who would be at least two, making eight in the family. But if there were three, it would make ten in the family. It appears that Abraham did not believe that Lot had made a difference for good in Sodom. In fact, in addition to not winning anyone, Lot lost his own family.

[2] This means that he had already achieved some importance in the city. The fact that Abraham rescued the people for Lot's sake certainly contributed – see verse 9 below.

[3] It seems that Lot realized, somehow, that they were not ordinary people. Perhaps, through his association with Abram, he had some knowledge of the supernatural.

[4] Lot knew that it would not work at all for them to stay in the square.

[5] Again, being materialized angels, they did not need to eat. But if they were presenting themselves as men, it would be part of the 'play'. But why was the bread 'unleavened'? Leavening takes time, which Lot did not have.

all the people of all the neighborhoods.[1] **5** And they called to Lot, and said to him: "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them sexually."[2] **6** Then Lot went out to them and shut the door behind him.[3] **7** And he said: "My brothers, please do not act so wickedly! **8** Come now, I have two daughters who have not known a man;[4] please let me bring them out to you, and do with them as you will; only do nothing to these men, since that is why they have come under the protection of my roof."[5] **9** But they said, "Stand back!" and went on: "This fellow came in to sojourn, and wants to judge everything. Now we will do worse to you than to them." And they attacked the man, Lot, and started to break down the door. **10** But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door.[6] **11** And they struck the men at the door of the house with blindness,[7] both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door.[8]

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[1] But how did the whole city find out in time to participate? Was it by demonic action?

[2] Jude 7 states that those men "went after a different kind of flesh". Be that as it may, the 'flesh' that an angel has when it materializes, is not human flesh. The men of Sodom also knew that the angels were not ordinary people, and they wanted to rape them.

[3] By shutting the door, he was at their mercy.

[4] They were virgins.

[5] Why did Lot offer up his daughters; was it because he knew that the two men were angels? But apparently he did not think that they could protect themselves. At that time hospitality was taken very seriously, and Lot would do his best to protect his guests. Even so, to offer his own daughters was an abomination. The cruel fact was that Lot was in a ‘dead end street’.

[6] They used supernatural power to do that.

[7] Here it became clear that the two were supernatural. Obviously the men outside didn't expect that.

[8] Wow, even though they were blind, they did not give up! They were certainly demonized. However, the angels were probably also

12 Then the men said to Lot: "Whom else do you have here? Take them out of this place: son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and all whom you have[1] in this city. **13** For we are about to destroy this place, because the outcry against them has become very great before JEHOVAH,[2] and JEHOVAH has sent us to destroy it." **14** So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were married to his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place, for JEHOVAH is about to destroy the city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.[3]

15 When the day dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Get up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here,[4] lest you be destroyed in the punishment of the city". **16** But he lingered, so the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, JEHOVAH having mercy on him; and they brought him out and put him outside the city.[5] **17** And it came to pass, when they had brought them out, that he said:[6] "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stop anywhere in the plain; escape to the mountain, lest you be destroyed." **18** And Lot said to them: "Oh no, Lord! **19** Indeed now, your servant has found grace in your sight,

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involved, or the men could have found the door by feel. In any case, the angels would not let them break down the door.

[1] The angels declare that God will take into consideration any people Lot had 'won' in the city, even though they knew that he had no one.

[2] Who was doing the 'crying', who was denouncing the iniquity? Daniel 4:17 speaks of "watchers", presumably a certain kind of angel; perhaps they were the ones.

[3] The husbands' attitude condemned Lot's married daughters, but they probably agreed with their husbands.

[4] "Take" meaning to take them out of the city. "Your two daughters who are here" indicates that there were others who were not there.

[5] The angels took them out by force, because they were under obligation to spare them (see verse 22). Each angel took two people.

[6] One of the two was the boss, and he spoke. It is to him that Lot addresses himself in verses 18 to 20.

and you have magnified your mercy which you have shown to me by saving my life; but I am not able to escape to the mountain, lest the calamity overtake me and I die.[1] **20** Look, that city is near to flee to, and it is small; please let me escape there, (is it not small?), that my soul may live." **21** And he said to him: "See, I have accepted you in this matter also, so as not to destroy the city of which you have spoken. **22** Hurry, escape there! For I cannot do anything until you have arrived there."[2] (So the name of the city was called Zoar.)[3]

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. **24** Then JEHOVAH Himself[4] rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah from the heavens. **25** And He destroyed those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and the produce of the soil. **26** But *Lot's* wife, who was behind him, looked back, and became a pillar of salt.[5] **27** And Abraham got up early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before JEHOVAH. **28** And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, yes indeed, the smoke of the land that went up

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[1] Probably Lot was not in a physical condition to run very far, and he doubted that he would have the strength to reach the mountain. He was afraid of dying.

[2] Obviously the angel had been ordered to spare Lot, at any cost.

[3] The name means: small. It is also true that Lot saved that village, otherwise it would have been destroyed as well.

[4] Why does the Text emphasize that it was Jehovah Himself? The situation there must have been REALLY bad! Indeed, the destruction was complete; in fact, Jude 7 says that God used “eternal fire”! Well, God used “brimstone and fire” (Genesis 19:24), and the eternal Lake contains “fire and brimstone” (Revelation 20:10).

[5] Certainly she was not in physical condition to run, and she was not enjoying having to leave the city. She could have been some distance behind Lot when she looked back. The destruction certainly made quite a bit of noise that she heard. Looking back had been forbidden. In Luke 17:32, Sovereign Jesus affirmed the historicity of the pillar of salt.

like the smoke of a furnace.[1] **29** When God destroyed the cities of the plain, God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of destruction,[2] when he destroyed the cities in which Lot had dwelt.[3]

30 Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him, because he was afraid to dwell in Zoar;[4] and he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.[5] **31** Then the first-born said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man in the land to come in to us, according to the custom of all the earth. **32** Come, let us make our father

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[1] Would he have known that Lot was delivered? Perhaps he was shaken, thinking that Lot was destroyed too. Jehovah had said that He would spare the city for ten, and since He did not spare it, there were not the ten.

[2] Here we have a clear statement that God saved Lot because of Abraham, despite the negative consequences that followed. Indeed, it would have been better for Lot to die in Sodom. I see a lesson for us here. Sometimes we pray 'for' someone based on our emotions, without thinking about God's will. And sometimes God answers those prayers, but the consequences are negative; it gets worse for the person for whom we prayed. We should always seek to know what the Father is doing (John 5:19). Further, when God chooses us, He does not turn us into robots, He respects our choices, but we and others must live with the consequences.

[3] The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah created the Dead Sea, totally altering the Jordan River valley. In order for all of this to enter the Historical Record, God saw fit to include Lot's story in this Record.

[4] Why was he afraid? Well, the pillar of salt would be very visible, as well as the ruins of Sodom, and Lot lost everything; He only had the clothes that he wore. Without being able to pay, there was no way to stay in the city. And the angel's command was to flee to the mountain. Even so, how did he survive? We are not told.

[5] Why did Lot not return to Abraham, who would surely care for him? Perhaps he was ashamed, and it would be too humiliating to return as a beggar. It is also possible that he became deeply depressed. His world had been totally destroyed; he lost everything, including his wife.

drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may keep alive our father's progeny."[1] **33** So they made their father drink wine that night; and the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down, nor when she got up.[2] **34** And it came to pass the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Now then, I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in and lie with him, that we may keep alive our father's progeny." **35** Then they made their father drink wine that night also; and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down, nor when she got up. **36** Thus both of Lot's daughters were with child by their father. **37** The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. **38** And the younger also gave birth to a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites to this day.[3]

Poor Abimelech!

20:1 And Abraham moved from there to the land of the south, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur;[4] and he stopped in Gerar. **2** And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister". And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.[5] **3** But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said

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[1] The main function of women was to produce children, and there was no man for them. And Lot was already without a wife, and he had no way of having descendants. That is to say, male descendants, because he already had daughters.

[2] That could not have been the normal procedure. One wonders if there was demonic participation.

[3] Lot should have died in Sodom.

[4] Abraham was probably sad and shaken by the destruction of Sodom and Lot as well, as far as he knew. It was natural for him to want to change the landscape.

[5] Our tendency is to say, "Not again!" But let's go slowly. First, Abraham was an ordinary human being, with the weaknesses we all have, not a superman (and he didn't have the Holy Spirit, like we do).

to him: "Listen! You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, because she has a husband." **4** But Abimelech had not come near her, and he said: "Lord, will you actually kill a righteous nation? **5** Didn't he himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother'.[1] In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my

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Second, I would say that he was demonized. How so? Satan has always been committed to overthrowing the plan of salvation. He brought about the Flood with the hybrid race of the *Nephilim*. Since the spirit and life are transmitted by the male sperm, if Satan had succeeded in contaminating everyone, there would have been no 'seed of the woman' (3:15). The moment God chose Abram and the land of Canaan, Satan had a new target. From Deuteronomy 2:10-12 and 20-21 we can understand that already in the time of Abraham, and even before, other mixed races had emerged, with impressive size.

The severity used by God in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah indicates that the level of wickedness there was unusual. Although the text does not directly speak of giants in Sodom, we can deduce that there were, because Deuteronomy 2:10-12 says that Moab, who occupied what was left of the area controlled by Sodom and Gomorrah (which was not under the Dead Sea), took the area from the *Emim* (who were the same size as the *Anakim*) – it appears that there were several mixed races of that type.

Sara was 90 years old; why did Abimelech become interested in such an old woman? I deduce from the Text that Sarah was already pregnant with Isaac, and Abraham absolutely should not have done what he did. Like in Egypt, he was expecting his wife to be taken; so why did he go there? The situation was so serious that God intervened energetically and without delay. Demons are cowards and like to attack the weak; and Abraham was emotionally shaken by Lot's death (as he had imagined). Do not forget that Satan had a special interest in preventing the birth of Isaac. But that is not all; when God decides to use a person in a special way, that person will be watched and attacked by Satan, without doubt, to this day! (Since he is not omnipresent, he presumably assigns a demon to watch the person.)

[1] By saying that, Sarah knew that she would be taken. So why did she do it?

hands I have done this."[1] **6** And God said to him in a dream: "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; so I myself kept you from sinning against me; that is why I did not allow you to touch her. **7** Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet,[2] and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you and all your people will surely die."[3]

8 So Abimelech got up early in the morning, called all his servants, and spoke all these words in their hearing; and the men were very afraid. **9** Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? In what way have I offended you, that you should bring such a sin upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that ought not to be done."[4] **10** And Abimelech said further to Abraham, "What did you have in view to do such a thing?" **11** And Abraham

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[1] It seems that at that time it was normal for a king to take a woman just because he wanted to; it was part of the culture. That was why the king thought he was innocent.

[2] Romans 11:29–"God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable." That is, God does not revoke them; what we do with them is another story. Abraham's being a prophet was determined by God and did not depend on his behavior. I see an important principle here: there is a sense in which the office is more important than the person who has that office; that is, God respects the office in spite of the person. Abraham had behaved badly, but being a prophet, God would listen to his prayer. Aaron had serious problems, but he was the High-priest. Kings had authority, in spite of their personal lives. Peter had his problems, but Jesus gave him the keys. A judge has authority, in spite of who he is. And so on. The principle holds for the choice of Israel, as a people or nation. God chose to deliver His Oracles to the human race through them, and the Messiah, the Savior of the world, came through them. And there is the throne of David, that the Messiah has yet to sit upon, but He will.

[3] The threat could not have been more serious, total destruction. God was really bent on saving Sarah and Isaac.

[4] Absolutely; the man's complaint was more than justified.

said, "Because I thought, 'Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me for my wife's sake'. **12** Yet she really is my sister, my father's daughter, but not my mother's daughter; and she became my wife. **13** And when God made me a wanderer from my father's house, I said to her, 'This is the kindness that you will do me in every place wherever we come; say of me, "He is my brother".'"

14 Then Abimelech took sheep and oxen, male and female slaves, and gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife to him. **15** And Abimelech said, "Indeed, my land is before you; live where it pleases you". **16** And to Sarah he said: "Indeed, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces* of silver. This is to make up for the offense against you in the sight of all those who are with you, and that all may consider you to be vindicated." **17** And Abraham prayed to God,[1] and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants, so that they had children. **18** For JEHOVAH had closed up every womb of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, the wife of Abraham.

The birth of Isaac

21:1 And JEHOVAH visited Sarah, as he had said;[2] yes, JEHOVAH did for Sarah as he had promised. **2** And Sarah conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the appointed time, which God had spoken to him. **3** And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah had borne to him, Isaac.[3] **4** And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when

[1] God had said that Abraham would pray for them, and he must have told Abraham what to pray for. In such a short time there would be no way to know about the closed wombs, by normal means.

[2] As is typical with Hebrew discourse structure, the topic changes without maintaining chronological sequence. Wanting to keep the sequence, the translation would be: And JEHOVAH had visited Sarah, as He had said; yes, JEHOVAH had done for Sarah as He had promised.

[3] God Himself had given that name in 17:19.

he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. **5** Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. **6** And Sarah said, "God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears it will laugh with me". **7** And she added: "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? for I have borne him a son in his old age."[1]

8 And the child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. **9** And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking. **10** So she said to Abraham, "Send away this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac". **11** And the matter was very distressing to Abraham because of his son.[2] **12** But God said to Abraham: "Do not be distressed because of the boy, and your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice, for in Isaac your seed shall be called. **13** Yet I will also make a nation of the bondwoman's son, because he is your descendant." **14** So Abraham got up early in the morning, took bread and a skin of water, and putting them on Hagar's shoulder he gave her the boy, and sent her away.[3] So she departed and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba.

15 The water in the skin was finished, and she put the boy under one of the bushes. **16** Then she went and sat down about a bow shot away from him; for she said, "Let me not see the death of the boy". And sitting down she raised her voice and wept sobbing.[4] **17** And God heard the voice of the

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[1] Only God could have known that, and He did!

[2] All said and done, Ishmael was his son, and Abraham had affection for him (remember 17:18).

[3] That was tough! Poor Hagar was not to blame; she was merely a piece on the chessboard. She wandered around because she didn't know where to go. But God kept an eye on her.

[4] Poor thing! She had plenty of reason.

boy,[1] and the Angel of God called to Hagar from the heavens, and said to her: “What is it, Hagar? Do not be afraid, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. **18** Get up, lift the boy up and take him by the hand; for I will make him a great nation." **19** And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. **20** And God was with the boy;[2] and he grew up and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.[3] **21** He dwelt in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother took him a wife from the land of Egypt.[4]

22 And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech, with Phichol the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying: "God is with you in all that you do. **23** Now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my grandson. According to the kindness with which I have treated you, you will treat me and the land wherein you have sojourned." **24** And Abraham said, "I will swear". **25** Then Abraham complained to Abimelech about a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had taken by force. **26** Then Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; and you also did not tell me, nor did I hear it until today". **27** Then Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech; and they both made a covenant. **28** Then Abraham set seven ewe-lambs of the flock by themselves. **29** And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What do these seven ewe-lambs mean, which you have set by themselves?" **30** And

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[1] We do not know what the boy said. But certainly the fact that he was rejected by his own father left a negative mark on his soul (remember the prophecy in 16:12). He was already a teenager.

[2] God took care of the boy, and of the mother too (He created the well of water), but that did not eliminate the suffering.

[3] He lived by hunting, a very different life from the one he had at his father's house.

[4] She was Egyptian and had relatives there.

he said, "You will receive these seven ewe-lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well". **31** That is why the place was called Beersheba,[1] because they both swore there. **32** So they made a covenant in Beersheba. Then Abimelech got up, and Phichol the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. **33** And Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called on the name of JEHOVAH, the Everlasting God.[2] **34** And Abraham lived in the land of the Philistines many days.

Moriah!

22:1 And it came to pass after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am". **2** Then He said: "Take now your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering[3] on one of the mountains, which I will indicate to you." **3** Then Abraham got up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey,[4] and took with him two of his young men, and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering.[5] He got up and went to the place that God had told him. **4** On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. **5** And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the youth will go over

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[1] The name means: well of the oath.

[2] In Hebrew it is: *El Olam*.

[3] I think we can agree that the test was very hard, not to say cruel, but Abraham obeyed without delay, even though God bluntly stated that he was to kill his son. 2 Chronicles 3:1 records that Solomon built the temple on Mount Moriah. Golgotha is nearby.

[4] Presumably the donkey was used to carry the firewood, water, and food, not for Abraham to ride. They would be away from home for at least five days.

[5] Abraham did not know Moriah, and he did not know what kind of wood he would have there. Also, the firewood had to be dry, not green. The safe thing to do was to take adequate firewood.

there, where we will worship, and we will return to you."[1]

6 Then Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire,[2] and the knife in his hand, and they both went together. **7** Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father, and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "We have the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" **8** And Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."[3] And both went on together. **9** Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son[4] and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. **10** Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.[5] **11** But the Angel of JEHOVAH called to him from the heavens, and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." **12** Then He said, "Do not lay your hand on the youth, nor do anything to him; for now I know that you

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[1] Notice the plural, "we will return". How could Isaac come back dead and burned? Hebrews 11:17-19 offers an inspired commentary on this test. "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; yes, he who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his only-begotten, of whom it had been said, 'Through Isaac will your seed be reckoned', calculating that God was indeed able to raise him from the dead; from where in fact he did received him, figuratively speaking." In fact, they returned together.

[2] Abraham must have taken a brazier with live coals when he left. They spent the night twice on the way and would want fire. And they renewed the embers.

[3] The answer was indirect. If Abraham really expected that God would provide the lamb, God waited until the last moment.

[4] Isaac was a young man strong enough to carry the wood. He could have defended himself by forbidding his father to tie him up, but he meekly submitted. Perhaps there was sovereign action of God in the case.

[5] Isaac would not be burned alive. In fact, none of the animal sacrifices were burned alive; they were killed first.

are a God-fearer, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."[1]

13 Then Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked; and there, behind him, was a ram, caught by its horns in a thicket. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering, instead of his son. **14** And Abraham called the name of that place, JEHOVAH Jireh;[2] as it is said to this day: 'In the mount of JEHOVAH[3] it will be provided'. **15** Then the Angel of JEHOVAH called to Abraham a second time from the heavens, **16** and said: "By myself I have sworn, says JEHOVAH, 'Because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son: **17** I will certainly bless you and multiply your offspring like the stars of the heavens, and like the sand on the seashore; and your descendants will possess the gate of their enemies. **18** Through your descendant all the ethnic nations of the earth shall be blessed; because you have obeyed my voice."[4] **19** Then Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba.

20 And it came to pass after these things that Abraham was told, saying, "Indeed, Milcah also has borne sons to your brother Nahor: **21** **"**Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, **22** Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." **23** And Bethuel begot Rebekah. Milcah bore those eight to Nahor, Abraham's brother. **24** And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bore Tebah, Gaham,

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[1] Presumably God knew beforehand, but Abraham had to prove it. See James 2:21-24.

[2] The name means, Jehovah will provide.

[3] 'In the mount of JEHOVAH': that was a special mount. If Jehovah is present in His mount, there will be no lack of provision.

[4] But God had already promised all this, without preconditions. I wonder why God kept repeating the Promise.

Tahash, and Maacah.[1]

Sarah's death and burial

23:1 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; those were the years of Sarah's life.[2] **2** Sarah died in Kiriatharba (which is Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.[3] **3** Then Abraham stood up from beside his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, **4** "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me the possession[4] of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of sight". **5** And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him: **6** "Hear us, my lord;[5] you are a prince of God[6] among us. Bury your dead in the best of our burying-places. None of us will withhold from you his burying-place, so that you may bury your dead." **7** Then Abraham stood up and bowed down to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth. **8** And he spoke with them, saying: "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me and intercede for me with Ephron the son of Zohar, **9** that he may give to me the

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[1] Nahor had twelve sons, quite apart from daughters. Evidently it was standard procedure to have more than one wife.

[2] If Sarah died at the age of 127, Abraham was 137 and Isaac was 37.

[3] If he came from Beersheba, he had a journey of about 60 km, in a straight line; they were living in separate places. Sarah certainly only learned the purpose of the trip to Moriah after the fact, when she asked her son for a report. Considering the whole idea to be abhorrent, she may have rebelled against Jehovah and Abraham, and eventually moved to Hebron, a familiar place. Naturally, she was accompanied by enough servants and cattle to protect and maintain her. Surely Abraham was told that she was dying.

[4] He was asking to buy it.

[5] One of the chiefs spoke for everyone.

[6] This is what the Text says. It could be 'of the gods' or seen as hyperbole, but they well knew that Abraham was a servant of Jehovah, who blessed him exceedingly. There was an altar to Jehovah there.

cave of Machpelah, which he has, which is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price as a possession of a burying-place among you."

10 Now Ephron was sitting in the midst of the sons of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, of all who entered the gate of his city, saying: **11** "No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that is in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people; bury your dead." **12** Then Abraham bowed down before the people of the land; **13** and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If only you would hear me; I will give the price of the field; take it from me, that I may bury my dead there". **14** And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him: **15** "My lord, hear me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver. What is that between me and you? So bury your dead."[1] **16** And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, standard among the merchants.

17 So the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, opposite Mamre, the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field,[2] that were within all the surrounding borders, **18** were confirmed to Abraham as a possession before the sons of Heth, before all who entered the gate of his city. **19** And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in

[1] That whole conversation was certainly the way in which such a subject was conducted at the time. Abraham knew he would have to pay, and Ephron probably charged plenty, but Abraham could afford it, and that cave served the family for generations.

[2] Why were the trees mentioned? I suppose they would hide the entrance to the cave, at least from a distance. There had to be a hill, for there to be a cave, and any travel would go around the hill.

the cave of the field of Machpelah, opposite Mamre, which is Hebron, in the land of Canaan. **20** So the field and the cave that is in it were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth for possession of a burying-place.

A bride for Isaac

24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age,[1] and JEHOVAH had blessed Abraham in all things. **2** And Abraham said to his slave, the oldest of his household, who ruled over all that he had: "Please put your hand under my thigh, **3** and I will make you swear by JEHOVAH, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell. **4** But you shall go to my country and to my kindred, to take a wife for my son Isaac." **5** And the slave said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me into this land; must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" **6** And Abraham said to him: "You be careful that you do not take my son back there! **7** JEHOVAH, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from my native land, who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'I will give this land to your descendants', He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. **8** If the woman does not want to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there." **9** Then the slave put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.[2]

10 Then the slave took ten of his master's camels and set

[1] He was now 140.

[2] In that culture and at that time, this procedure must have been customary for solemn oaths.

out, taking with him all manner of his master's good things.[1]
He rose up and left for Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.[2]
11 And he made the camels kneel outside the city, by a well
of water, in the evening, the time when the women went out
to draw water. **12** And he said: "O JEHOVAH, the God of my
master Abraham! Please give me success today, and show
kindness to my master Abraham. **13** Finally, I am standing by
the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city
are coming out to draw water. **14** Now let it be that the young
woman to whom I say, 'Please lower your pitcher that I may
drink', and she says, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels',
let it be she whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac.
And by this I will know that you have shown kindness to my
master."[3]

15 And it happened, before he had finished speaking,
that really, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of
Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with
her pitcher on her shoulder. **16** Now the young woman was
very good looking, a virgin, whom no man had known; and
she went down to the well, filled her pitcher and came back
up. **17** Then the slave ran to meet her, and said, "Please let
me drink a little water from your pitcher". **18** And she said,
"Drink, my lord"; and she hurried and lowered her pitcher
upon her hand, and gave him a drink. **19** And when she had
finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will also draw water
for your camels, until they have finished drinking". **20** And she
hurried and emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran again to

[1] He wasn't going to get there empty-handed!

[2] Nahor had moved from Ur to the area of Haran; the town was called Paddan-Aram. “Mesopotamia” referred to the area between the two rivers: Tigris and Euphrates.

[3] The servant gave God plenty of detail!

the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.[1] **21** And the man watched her in silence, to know whether JEHOVAH had prospered his journey or not.

22 So when the camels had finished drinking, the man took a nose-ring of gold, weighing half a shekel, and two gold bracelets for her wrists, weighing ten *shekels*. **23** And he said: "Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" **24** And she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor".[2] **25** She also said to him, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, and room to lodge". **26** Then the man bowed down and worshipped JEHOVAH. **27** And he said, "Blessed be JEHOVAH, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His goodness and His truth toward my master; as for me, JEHOVAH has led me on the way to the house of my master's relatives." **28** So the young woman ran and told these things to her mother's household.

29 Now Rebekah had a brother, whose name was Laban; and Laban ran out to the man at the well. **30** When he saw the nose-ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me", then he went to the man, who was

[1] The girl was not afraid of work, and was helpful (perhaps God had helped too); for ten thirsty camels, that was a lot of water!

[2] Bethuel was the eighth son of Nahor by Milcah. Nahor was sixty years older than Abram, and Abram was a hundred years old when Isaac was born. Even though Bethuel was the eighth son, he could easily have been sixty years older than Isaac, or even more. Isaac was forty at the time, which would give Bethuel a hundred years. Perhaps that was why Laban conducted the business, rather than his father.

standing by the camels at the well.[1] **31** And he said: "Come in, blessed of JEHOVAH;[2] why are you standing outside? For I have prepared the house, and the place for the camels." **32** Then the man went into the house. And he [Laban] unloaded the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the feet of the men with him.[3]

33 Then food was placed before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have spoken my message". And *Laban* said, "Well speak!" **34** So he said: "I am Abraham's slave. **35** JEHOVAH has blessed my master very much, and he has become great. Yes, He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys. **36** And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old; to whom he has given all that he has. **37** And my master made me swear, saying: 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell. **38** Rather, you shall go to my father's house, and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' **39** Then I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me'. **40** And he said to me: 'JEHOVAH, before whom I walk,[4] will send His angel with you, and prosper your way. And you shall take a wife for my son from my family, from my father's house. **41** When you have come to my family, then you will be released from my

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[1] Well, well, Laban had his problems, but he wasn't stupid. Someone who paid for a small service with gold and who had ten camels – Laban wasted no time!

[2] Note that Laban used God's personal name.

[3] Carrying so much wealth, he certainly had armed guards, maybe five or six.

[4] What does "before whom I walk" mean? God is watching everything that we do, whether we keep that in mind, or not. But here Abraham affirms that Jehovah has a special interest in the case.

oath; if they do not give one to you, you will be released from my oath.'

42 “Now today I came to the well, and said: 'O JEHOVAH, the God of my master Abraham! Please prosper my way in which I go. **43** As you see, I am standing by the well of water; let it be therefore that the young woman who comes out to draw water, to whom I say, “Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher”**,** **44** and she says to me, “Drink, and I will also draw for your camels”; let her be the woman whom JEHOVAH has appointed for my master's son.' **45** Before I had finished speaking in my heart, yes indeed, Rebekah came out with her pitcher on her shoulder, went down to the well, and drew. Then I said to her, 'Please give me a drink'. **46** And she hurried, lowered her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels'; so I drank, and she also watered the camels. **47** Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, ‘Bethuel’s, a son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him'. So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. **48** And I bowed down and worshipped JEHOVAH, and blessed JEHOVAH, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. **49** So now, if you will deal kindly and faithfully with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right or to the left."

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said: "The thing has come from JEHOVAH;[1] we cannot speak to you bad

[1] Why did God record this repetitive repetition, which might seem unnecessary to us? It seems to me that it was to emphasize Jehovah's direct participation from the beginning to the end of the story, which, by the way, convinced Bethuel and Laban. They recognized Jehovah's hand and submitted without protest.

or good.[1] **51** Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as JEHOVAH has spoken." **52** When Abraham's slave heard their words, he bowed down to the earth before JEHOVAH. **53** And the slave brought out vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; and he gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.[2] **54** Then they ate and drank,[3] he and the men who were with him, and spent the night. When they got up in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master". **55** But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us at least ten days, then she may go". **56** But he said to them, "Do not detain me, since JEHOVAH has prospered my way; send me away, that I may go to my master".[4] **57** So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally". **58** Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go!"[5]

59 Then they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's slave and his men. **60** And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become the

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[1] This seems to be an expression meaning that they really did not have a choice, or voice, in the matter. Jehovah had spoken, and that was that.

[2] All of that certainly helped the environment!

[3] That whole conversation didn't take that long; so they did not really suffer because of the delay.

[4] For him it would be ten days lost. He wanted to give the woman to Isaac as soon as possible.

[5] Well, for the first time in her life Rebecca had gold. At that time, marriage was based on financial condition and social position, and not on emotion or passion (although love could come). If she was still single, it was because she had no attractive option near bye. So she gladly said, "I will go!"

mother of thousands of ten-thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them!" **61** Then Rebekah and her maidservants[1] got up, mounted the camels, and followed the man. So the slave took Rebekah and departed. **62** Now Isaac had come from *Beer-lahai-roi*,[2] for he dwelt in the land of the south.[3] **63** And Isaac went out into the field to meditate in the evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and the camels were coming! **64** Rebekah also had looked up and seen Isaac, and she dismounted from the camel. **65** For she had said to the slave, "Who is that man who is walking in the field to meet us?" And the slave said, "He is my master". Then she took her veil and covered herself **66** And the slave told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67** Then Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. Thus Isaac was comforted for his mother.[4]

The death of Abraham

25:1 Now Abraham had taken another wife, and her name was Keturah.[5] **2** And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan,

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[1] "Maidservants" is plural, so that in addition to the nurse there was at least one more. The number would be limited by the number of camels available.

[2] The name means: the well of him who lives and sees me.

[3] He would have come to Beersheba, where his father was living, for verse 67 mentions "the tent of his mother Sarah". Although Sarah had died in Hebron, she would have had a tent in Beersheba. But this was several years after her death; why was her tent still available?

[4] Since his mother had died three years earlier, he must have really missed her.

[5] 1 Chronicles 1:32 says that Keturah was Abraham's concubine, and verse 6 here mentions "concubines", plural. Hagar was a concubine, no doubt. If Sarah rebelled against Abraham and Jehovah because of Moriah, Abraham may have begun with Keturah before Sarah's

Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. **3** And Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan; and the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim and Leummim. **4** And the sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were sons of Keturah. **5** And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; **6** But to the sons of Abraham's concubines that he had, Abraham gave gifts; and while he was still alive he sent them away from his son Isaac, and sent them eastward to an eastern land.[1]

7 These are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years. **8** And Abraham expired and died in a good old age, aged and full of years, and he was gathered to his people. **9** And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, opposite Mamre, **10** the field which Abraham had bought from the sons of Heth. That is where Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. **11** And it came to pass, after Abraham's death, that God blessed Isaac his son; and Isaac dwelt by the well *Beer-lahai-roi*.

12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. **13** These are the names of the sons of Ishmael, name by name, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael was Nebaioth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, **14** Mishma, Dumah, Massa, **15** Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. **16** These were the sons of Ishmael, and these were their names in their settlements and in their camps; twelve chiefs according to their clans. **17** These were the

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death. What is certain is that Sarah was not with Abraham when she died.

[1] They may have gone together, as a family. Since they had certainly been circumcised, and were Abraham's descendants, I wonder what became of them. The Midianites are mentioned.

years of Ishmael's life, one hundred and thirty-seven years;[1] and he expired and died and was gathered to his people. **18** (They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is opposite Egypt, as one goes toward Asshur; he had settled over against all his brothers.[2])

19 Now these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begot Isaac. **20** And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah the daughter of Bethuel, an Aramean of Paddan-Aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife. **21** And Isaac pleaded with JEHOVAH on behalf of his wife, because she was barren;[3] and JEHOVAH was entreated by him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. **22** And the babies struggled together inside her. So she said, "I wonder what is happening to me". And she went to ask JEHOVAH.[4] **23** And JEHOVAH said to her: "There are two nations in your womb, yes, two peoples will be separated from your body; one people will be stronger than the other people; and the older will serve the younger."[5]

24 And when her days were fulfilled to give birth, indeed, she had twins in her womb. **25** And the first came out red, his whole body like a hairy garment; so they called his name

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[1] Since Isaac died at the age of 180, he lived 43 years longer than did Ishmael.

[2] These would have to be Keturah's sons, and this is the last mention they receive, except for the Midianites (and the Medanites, in the Hebrew Text).

[3] Since Isaac was sixty years old when the twins were born, Rebekah had been married for nineteen years when she conceived. It was natural for Isaac to plead with Jehovah, for without a son the promises could not be fulfilled.

[4] She did the right thing, inquiring of Jehovah, and He answered!

[5] She certainly told Isaac this, so that he knew that Jehovah had chosen the younger.

Esau.[1] **26** And afterward his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob.[2] Isaac was sixty years old[3] when she bore them. **27** And the boys grew up, and Esau became an expert hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents.

28 Isaac loved Esau because he liked game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. **29** Now Jacob had prepared a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint from hunger. **30** And Esau said to Jacob, "Quick, let me eat of that red stuff, the red stuff over there, because I'm famished!" That is why his name was called Edom.[4] **31** Then Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today". **32** And Esau said, "Hey, I am dying; so what *good will* the birthright do me?" **33** And Jacob said, "Swear to me today". So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. **34** And Jacob gave Esau bread and the stew of lentils; and he ate and drank, and got up and left. Thus Esau despised the birthright.

God blesses Isaac

26:1 And there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine, which was in the days of Abraham; and Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, to Gerar. **2** And JEHOVAH appeared to him, and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land that I indicate to you. **3** Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for I will give all these lands to you and your descendants, and will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. **4** And I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and will give all these lands to your descendants; and through your descendant all

[1] The name means: hairy.

[2] The name means: place-taker.

[3] Since he died at 180, he lived for 120 more years.

[4] The name means: red.

the nations of the earth shall bless themselves;[1] **5** For Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my precepts, my statutes, and my laws."[2] **6** So Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

7 And the men of the place asked about his wife, and he said, "She is my sister";[3] for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife", 'lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah'; because she was good looking. **8** Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw Isaac caressing Rebekah his wife![4] **9** Then Abimelech called Isaac, and said, "Indeed, she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die because of her'." **10** And Abimelech said: "What is this that you have done to us? One of the people could easily have lain with your wife,[5]

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[1] If I am not mistaken, the verb here is in the reflexive voice, which is why I translated it that way. When someone surrenders to Sovereign Jesus, he receives God's protection and blessing. So, we could say that this person, by making this decision, is blessing himself. The same thing happens when a nation decides to obey God's laws.

[2] We have no record of all these things; God must have given him instructions that are not in the Text. In fact, during the hundred years that Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan, certainly much more happened than is reported in the Text.

[3] Not again! In Abraham's case, it was a half-truth, but here it was simply a lie. Like Abraham, Isaac was offering his wife to them to save his own skin!

[4] This case is curious. For the king to see what he saw, he had to be on a second or third floor. That the king's palace had more than one floor would not be surprising, but how could Isaac's tent be so close to the palace? How was there even room for that, and how was it allowed?

[5] "One of the people" – if it was the same Abimelech who suffered with Abraham, he had already been 'scalded' and would not repeat it; but even if it was a son, he was already grown when the affair with Abra-ham happened, and he would not have forgotten. So he himself would not touch Rebekah, but that would not necessarily hold for all his men.

and you would have brought guilt upon us." **11** And Abimelech charged all the people, saying, "Whoever touches this man or his wife will surely be put to death!"

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped that same year a hundredfold, because JEHOVAH was blessing him. **13** And the man became great, and grew rich, until he became very rich; **14** for he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and many slaves; so that the Philistines envied him. **15** And all the wells which his father's slaves had dug in the days of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up and filled with earth.[1] **16** Then Abimelech said to Isaac, "Depart from us; for you are more powerful than we are."[2]

17 So Isaac departed from there, encamped in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. **18** And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and which the Philistines had filled up after the death of Abraham; and he called them by the names which his father had called them. **19** Isaac's slaves also dug in an arroyo and found there a well of living water. **20** But the shepherds of Gerar contended with Isaac's shepherds, saying, "The water is ours!" So he called the name of the well Esek,[3] because they contended with him.[4] **21** Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it also; so he called its name Sitnah.[5] **22** And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he called its name Rehoboth,[6] and

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[1] Water was difficult to find, and therefore precious. To stop up a well would be nonsense. The Philistines must have been really mad, or maybe demonized.

[2] Indeed, Isaac's presence was already problematic.

[3] The name means: contention.

[4] At least they didn't stop it up! But it appears that the people of the valley were not enjoying Isaac's presence either.

[5] The name means: opposition.

[6] The name means: space.

said, "For now JEHOVAH has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba.[1] **24** And JEHOVAH appeared to him that very night, and said: "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you; and I will bless you and multiply your descendants, because of Abraham my servant." **25** Then he built an altar there, and called on the name of JEHOVAH, and pitched his tent there; and Isaac's slaves dug a well there.

26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his aide, and Phichol the commander of his army. **27** And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and sent me away from you?" **28** And they said: "We have clearly seen that JEHOVAH is with you. So we said: 'Let there now be an oath between us, between us and you; and let us make a covenant with you: **29** that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have only done you good, and let you go in peace'—you being the blessed one of JEHOVAH."[2] **30** Then he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. **31** And they got up early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; then Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. **32** And it came to pass that same day, that Isaac's slaves came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water". **33** And he called its name Shibah; so the

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[1] Isaac knew this place very well; it was there that his father lived, and it was there that he received Rebekah.

[2] Notice that they called God by his proper name, Jehovah. "You are the blessed one of JEHOVAH"–they understood that Jehovah was responsible for Isaac's extraordinary prosperity. But the fact that they went to Beersheba to ask for an alliance showed a concern of some size; they didn't want to fight with that God! Perhaps it would be better to say that they were acknowledging and even worshipping Jehovah. It is reminiscent of Romans 2:14-15.

name of the city is Beersheba, to this day.[1]

34 Now when Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. **35** And they were a grief of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah.

Jacob is blessed

27:1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old, and his eyes became so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son". And he said to him, "Here I am". **2** And he said: "The fact is, I am old; I do not know the day of my death.[2] **3** Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver, and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. **4** And make me tasty food, such as I love,[3] and bring it to me that I may eat; that my soul may bless you before I die."[4]

5 Now Rebekah heard what Isaac said to his son Esau. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. **6** Then Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying: "Indeed, I heard your father speaking to your brother Esau saying, **7** 'Bring me game, and make me tasty food, that I may eat, and bless you

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[1] Now Abraham had already dug a well there and named it Beersheba. But Abraham had died, and Isaac was absent for a time. The inhabitants of the place would have taken the well, a logical thing, and Isaac was forced to dig another one, giving it the same name that his father had given.

[2] He was 137 years old, and died at 180. But being completely blind, life was no longer 'fun'.

[3] Being blind, the pleasure he still had was eating.

[4] That was serious. Isaac well knew that Jehovah had said that the elder would serve the younger, and he must have heard of the episode when Esau sold the birthright to Jacob. Therefore, the decision to give Esau the greatest blessing was a rebellion against Jehovah, a fact that he came to recognize (verse 33).

before JEHOVAH before I die.'[1] **8** Now therefore, my son, hear my voice in what I command you: **9** Go now to the flock, and bring me from there two good kids of the goats, and I will make tasty food for your father, such as he loves. **10** And you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." **11** Then Jacob said to Rebekah his mother: "You know that Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. **12** Perhaps my father will feel me, and I will seem to be a deceiver to him; and I will bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing." **13** And his mother said to him, "Your curse be upon me, my son; only listen to my voice and go, get them for me". **14** And he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made tasty food, such as his father loved. **15** Then Rebekah took the best clothes of her older son Esau, that were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. **16** And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands, and on the smooth of his neck. **17** And she gave the tasty food and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 So he went to his father, and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" **19** And Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you said to me; please get up, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." **20** But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you found it so quickly, my son?"[2] And he said, "Because JEHOVAH

[1] Rebekah understood what Isaac was about to do, and she knew that it represented rebellion against Jehovah's stated will. Whether or not we agree with what she did, the fact is that God used her to thwart Isaac's plan.

[2] Isaac was suspicious; the difficulty was the voice. Even if Jacob tried to copy Esau's way of speaking, he could hardly copy it perfectly, precisely because of the quality of the voice.

your God brought it to me".[1] **21** And Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near now, that I may feel you, my son; whether you are really my son Esau or not". **22** So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau".[2] **23** And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like the hands of Esau his brother; so he blessed him. **24** And he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" And he said, "I am". **25** Then he said, "Bring it to me and I will eat of my son's game, that my soul may bless you". So he took it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine, and he drank. **26** Then his father Isaac said to him, "Now come and kiss me, my son".[3] **27** And he came and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothes, blessed him and said: "Indeed, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which JEHOVAH has blessed. **28** So then, may God give you of the dew of the heavens, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. **29** Let nations serve you, and peoples bow down to you. Be a ruler to your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you."

30 And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely left the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. **31** And he also made tasty food, and brought it to his father; and said to his father, "Let my father get up and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me". **32** And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau". **33** Then Isaac trembled

[1] That was a lie, pure and simple! It took a deal of 'daring' to introduce Jehovah into the plot.

[2] It was the voice, but how could Jacob's hands be hairy?

[3] Isaac was reluctant, he was still suspicious.

violently,[1] and said: "Who then was the one who hunted game and brought it to me? And I ate from all before you came, and blessed him; and indeed he shall be blessed!"[2]

34 When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out with a great and very bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, me also, my father!" **35** But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and took your blessing". **36** Then he said: "That is why his name is called Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times. He took my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing!"[3] And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" **37** Then Isaac answered and said to Esau: "Indeed, I have made him your ruler, and all his brothers I have given to him as servants; I have sustained him with grain and wine. What then can I do for you, my son?" **38** And Esau said to his father: "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me also, my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept. **39** Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Yes, your dwelling will have the fatness of the earth, and the dew from the heavens above. **40** And you shall live by your sword, and

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[1] The Hebrew expression here is very strong; Isaac was terrified, realizing that he was in rebellion against Jehovah.

[2] Isaac recognized that, even though he was deceived, he did the right thing: he blessed Jacob; and he declared that it would remain so. Hebrews 12:16-17 affirms this: "Let no one be a fornicator or worldly like Esau, who in exchange for one meal gave up his birthright. Because you do indeed know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; he found no place for a change of mind, though he sought it diligently with tears." Neither Isaac nor God changed his mind; Jacob was in and Esau was out.

[3] Esau was the kind of person who never takes responsibility for what he does; he always blames others, or the circumstances. Jacob did not 'take' the birthright, Esau sold it, knowing what he was doing. Since he had sold the birthright, he was no longer entitled to the blessing.

serve your brother; but when you become free, you will shake off his yoke from your neck."

41 So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob'. **42** And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah,[1] so she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him: "Look, your brother Esau is comforting himself concerning you, intending to kill you. **43** Now therefore, my son, listen to my voice in your own interest: arise and flee to Laban my brother, to Haran.[2] **44** And stay with him a few days, until the fury of your brother turns away;[3] **45** until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send to bring you back from there.[4] Why should I be bereaved of you both on the same day?" **46** And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as the daughters of the land, what *good will* life be to me?"

Jacob Goes to Paddan-Aram

28:1 Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged

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[1] Surely Esau had spoken of his purpose openly, somewhere (perhaps to his women), which made it possible for it to get to Rebekah.

[2] 28:2 says that Laban lived in Paddan-Aram; Haran was the name of the area.

[3] Rebekah was afraid that Esau would not wait; taken by fury, he could act at any moment.

[4] But she never saw Jacob again. That is a deduction, based on her statement that she would send for him. If she ever did send for him, he would not have been able to return during the first fourteen years because he was paying for his wives. Curiously, her death is not recorded. What is recorded is the death of her nurse (Genesis 35:8). It is also recorded that she was buried in Machpelah (Genesis 49:31). Esau must not have liked his mother very much, and Isaac, being blind, could do nothing.

him, saying: “You must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. **2** Arise, go to Paddan-Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father, and take a wife for yourself from there, from the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother.[1] **3** May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, so that you may become a community of peoples. **4** And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.”[2] **5** So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-Aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.[3]

6 (Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-Aram to take a wife for himself from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, “You must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan”; **7** and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and gone to Paddan-Aram. **8** Esau also saw that the daughters of Canaan were not acceptable to Isaac his father, **9** so Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebaioth,[4] to be his

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[1] Evidently, they were not yet aware of the dangers of inbreeding, and it was a tradition within the family. This may be why Sarai and Rebekah were barren, as was Rachel. With Jacob things began to change, since two of his four wives were from outside the family. As for Jacob's sons, none of them married within the family.

[2] Isaac passed Abraham's blessing on to Jacob. He understood that God had used Rebekah’s ‘trick’ to circumvent his own rebellion.

[3] Esau married when he was forty (26:34), and Isaac was a hundred. Now Isaac was 137, and so the twins were 77, and Esau probably had grown children. Therefore he would have had his own little compound, some distance from Isaac's. Jacob probably left while it was dark, and it was some time before Esau learned what had happened.

[4] Mahalath was the sister of Nebaioth. 25:13 says that Nebaioth was the firstborn of Ishmael.

wife, besides the wives he had.)

10 So Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran.[1] **11** And he came to a certain place, and there he spent the night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and lay down in that place. **12** And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and indeed, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.[2] **13** And behold, Jehovah stood above it and said, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac;[3] I will give the land on which you lie to you and your descendants. **14** And your descendants will be as the dust of the earth; and you will spread out to the west, to the east, to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendant[4] all the families of the earth will be blessed. **15** And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." **16** Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know it".

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[1] It appears that Paddan-Aram was located in the area dominated by the city of Haran, where Terah died. Nahor must have moved there from Ur. In 24:10 Abraham's servant went to Mesopotamia, the area where Haran was located. (Mesopotamia means 'between rivers', the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates.)

[2] The text states that they were angels. It was certainly the first time, but not the last, that Jacob saw an angel (Mahanaim).

[3] Jehovah introduced himself and identified himself. But why did God appear to Jacob at this moment? Jacob was fleeing, carrying only what he had on his back. At the age of 77, it was the most depressing moment of his life. It was a strategic moment for God. The promise was detailed, and it was one-sided.

[4] The Hebrew text has 'seed' both here and at the beginning of the verse, and the word can be understood as singular or plural. It is through the Savior that all the families of the earth are blessed.

17 And he was afraid[1] and said, “How fearsome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; and this is the gate of heaven.”[2]

18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, took the stone that he had placed at his head and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it.[3] **19** And he called the name of that place Bethel,[4] although the name of that city at first was Luz. **20** Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothes to wear,[5] **21** so that I return to my father’s house in peace, then Jehovah will be my God.[6] **22** And this stone that I have set up as a pillar will become God’s house;[7] and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”[8]

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[1] When God appears, it usually causes fear. But it is also true that Jacob had not been relating to Him, which we can understand from verse 21.

[2] There was even a ladder to climb up! But of course it wasn’t physical. It was a Sovereign event that was not repeated.

[3] He was travelling ‘light’, but he had some ‘oil’, presumably vegetable. Why would he be carrying oil?

[4] Bethel means ‘the house of God’. From Beersheba to Bethel was about 100 km, in a straight line. Jacob walked a long way that day. He was running away; it was still dark when he left, and he walked as fast as he could all day, stopping when there was no more light for walking.

[5] Wow, he only asked for food and clothes, the basics to survive. Did he not even have money to buy food?

[6] He repeated some of what Jehovah had said. Jehovah introduced Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac, and here Jacob wants to be added to that list.

[7] How so, ‘house of God’? Can a stone be a house of God? Or did he want it to be a place where he could always meet with God?

[8] Dear me, Jacob thought that he could negotiate with God! Since he knew Abraham personally, he must have learned the idea of tithing from him, when he met Melchizedek. But, how could he give that tithe to God? In fact, that tithe is never mentioned again. Up to the

Jacob arrives and marries

29:1 Then Jacob continued his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. **2** And he looked, and there was a well in the field, and furthermore, three flocks of sheep were lying by it!—for they watered the flocks from that well; and there was a large stone on the well's mouth. **3** (For all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone away from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and then put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.) **4** And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran". **5** And he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him". **6** And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." **7** Then he said, "Look, the sun is still high; it is not the time to gather the cattle; water the sheep, and go and feed them." **8** But they said, "We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered and they roll the stone away from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."[1]

9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. **10** It happened, when Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the sheep of Laban his mother's brother.[2] **11** Then Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up his voice and wept.[3] **12** And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's

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last clause, Jacob addressed God indirectly, but then switched to direct address.

[1] This is curious; in verse 10 Jacob removes the stone alone. It seems that this was an arbitrary rule among them.

[2] The Hebrew text repeats the phrase.

[3] He wept in shame and bitterness. Abraham's servant had come with ten camels, gold and silver; Jacob came with nothing. He had come

brother, the son of Rebecca. So she ran and told her father.[1]

13 So when Laban heard the news about Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, embraced him and kissed him, and brought him into his house. And he told Laban all these things.[2] **14** Then Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh". And he stayed with him a full month. **15** Then Laban said to Jacob, "Should you serve me for nothing because you are my brother? Tell me, what should your wages be?" **16** Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. **17** Leah's eyes were dull, but Rachel was beautiful in body and appearance. **18** Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter".[3] **19** And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man; stay with me." **20** So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him only a few days,[4] because of the love he had for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, “Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, so that I may go in to her”.[5] **22** So Laban gathered all the men of the place together and made a feast.

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looking for a wife, but he had nothing with which to pay (and he was 77 years old). In 32:10 he himself said, “I crossed this Jordan with my staff”. Everything we do has consequences. Jacob obtained Abraham’s blessing in a dubious way, but he paid dearly for it.

[1] She left the sheep with Jacob.

[2] He must have told enough of the story to explain his presence there, under those circumstances.

[3] Why did Jacob offer seven years? I believe Laban would have accepted less. His daughters were stranded.

[4] The phrase, “seemed to him only a few days”, requires that the “seven years” be understood literally. Jacob married Leah and Rachel after the seven years. The problem of Dinah’s age has a different solution, as I explain below.

[5] The phrase ‘go in to her’ is used in the OT in the sense of ‘have sex with her’, or ‘marry her’.

23 But in the evening, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. **24** (Laban also gave his maidservant Zilpah to his daughter Leah, as her maid-servant.) **25** When morning came, oh no, it was Leah![1] Then he said to Laban, "How is it that you have done this to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you tricked me?" **26** And Laban said, "To give the younger before the older is not done here.[2] **27** Complete the week of this one,[3] and then we will give you the other also,[4] in return for the service of yet another seven years that you will serve me."[5]

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[1] It seems that it was customary at that time to place the bride on a bed in a dark room. When the groom entered, he could not see who it was. Leah certainly kept quiet, so as not to be betrayed by the voice (and she obviously participated in the trick willingly). That is why Jacob only discovered the betrayal with the light of day. If the feast included alcoholic beverages, he may have been a little intoxicated as well.

[2] In that case, why was Jacob not informed of that rule? Laban was devious, not to say dirty.

[3] Here it is a week of seven days, Leah's bridal week.

[4] Jacob received Rachel after Leah's seven days, not after another seven years.

[5] Jacob was not the more clever; in that 'discipline' Laban was a graduate professor. Jacob was completely vulnerable, and Laban knew very well how to take advantage of this weakness. Laban and Rebekah were siblings, and Rebekah only had children after twenty years of marriage, and Laban did not sit still during all that time. If Jacob was already 84 years old, then Leah was certainly at least 60, and probably more–she was stranded, no one wanted her. However, she had a relationship with Jehovah and verbally acknowledged Him when the children were born. And verse 31 makes clear that God recognized that relationship. But it was also true that God had blessed Laban to an unusual extent during those years, and he wanted more blessing.

Returning to Laban, he suddenly saw a great opportunity to get rid of Leah, and he did not miss the chance. Still and all, just as God

28 And Jacob did so and fulfilled Leah's week. So *Laban* gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. **29** (Laban also gave his maidservant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel, as her maidservant.) **30** Then *Jacob* went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he worked for *Laban* another seven years.[1] **31** And Jehovah saw that Leah was disregarded, and He opened her womb;[2] but Rachel was barren.

The sons kept coming[3]

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used Rebekah's deceit to circumvent Isaac's rebellion, God used Laban's cleverness to further the Plan. If Jacob had married Rachel first, he would have been satisfied and would not have thought about Leah. But the Messiah would come through Leah, not Rachel. Further, Rachel's barrenness led to the inclusion of the two handmaids as concubines; the four women produced the twelve sons, half of them being Leah's!

[1] This makes clear that "Leah's week" was seven solar days.

[2] Repeatedly, it is stated that Jehovah controls conception.

[3] The passage from 29:32 through 30:24 deals with the birth of Jacob's sons; it is the topic of the passage. The Hebrew discourse structure usually deals topic by topic, without regard to the chronological sequence of events; and it can treat the same topic from different perspectives. Failure to take this factor into account has led commentators to misinterpret "when Rachel had given birth to Joseph" in 30:25. That saying is chronological, and the context makes it clear that it refers to the end of Jacob's 14 years of service for both wives. But Jacob did not receive Leah until after seven years of service (and Rachel seven solar days after Leah). It is clear that Reuben could not have been born before the eighth year of this service. Although the record mentions only one daughter, Dinah, 37:35 makes it clear that Jacob had other daughters (which would be normal), for it mentions "all his daughters". The difficulty is that the second seven-year period simply does not accommodate so many births, a difficulty that results from the mistake of assuming that 30:25 applies to the previous section.

It is necessary to understand that the account of the births is independent of the time of Joseph's birth. Certainly a good number of the births occurred during the following six years. The text makes it clear that when Jacob left Paddan-Aram (after twenty years) he

29:32 Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben;[1] for she said, "Surely Jehovah has noticed my affliction;[2] therefore now my husband will love me". **33** And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Surely Jehovah has heard that I am disregarded, and He has given me this one also". And she called his name Simeon.[3] **34** And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons". So his name was called Levi.[4] **35** And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "This time I will praise Jehovah". So she called his name Judah;[5] and she stopped bearing.

30:1 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I will die". **2** Then Jacob was angry with Rachel and said, "Am I in God's place, who has withheld the fruit of the womb from you?" **3** So she said, "Here is my maidservant Bilhah; go in to her, that she may bear children for me, that I also may be built up through her."[6] **4** And she gave him Bilhah her maidservant as a wife; and Jacob went in to her. **5** And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. **6** Then Rachel said,

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had eleven sons, and certainly Dinah as well. The birth of Joseph is included in the previous passage because it is part of the topic.

[1] The name means: look, a son.

[2] Laban had the family idols, but Leah acknowledged Jehovah, which she did with her second son as well (verse 31 says that it was Jehovah who opened her womb). With the fourth, she praised Jehovah, and the fourth was Judah, through whom the Messiah came.

[3] The name means: hearing.

[4] The name means: attached.

[5] The name means: praise.

[6] According to the norms of Hebrew discourse, Rachel probably did not wait until the birth of Leah's fourth son, not necessarily. Rachel did the same thing with Bilhah that Rebekah did with Hagar, but the outcome was quite different.

"God has judged, and has also heard my voice and given me a son". Therefore she called his name Dan.[1] **7** And Bilhah Rachel's maidservant conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. **8** Then Rachel said, "With the wrestlings 'of gods' I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed!" So she called his name Naphtali.[2]

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she also took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. **10** And Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, bore Jacob a son. **11** Then Leah said, "A troop is coming!"[3] And she called his name Gad. **12** Then Leah's maidservant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. **13** Then Leah said, "How happy I am! For the daughters will call me happy." And she named him Asher.[4] **14** In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went out and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes". **15** But she said to her, "Was it a small thing that you took my husband?[5] Would you also take my son's mandrakes?" Then Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes". **16** When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes".[6] And he lay with her that night. **17** And God listened to Leah,[7] and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth

[1] The name means: judgment.

[2] The name means: wrestling.

[3] The interpretation of the Hebrew here is in doubt.

[4] The name means: happy.

[5] Just as Esau did not 'remember' that he had sold the birthright, Leah did not 'remember' that it was she who stole Jacob from Rachel in the beginning.

[6] Apparently Jacob had not been paying attention to her, so she had to 'buy' that attention.

[7] It wasn't the mandrakes, it was God. But why was this episode included in the historical record? It seems that Jacob was no longer

son. **18** Then Leah said, “God has given me my wages, for I have given my maidservant to my husband”.[1] So she called his name Issachar.[2] **19** Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. **20** And Leah said, “God has given me a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons”. And she called his name Zebulun.[3] **21** And afterward she bore a daughter, and she called her name Dinah.[4] **22** And God remembered Rachel; God listened to her, and opened her womb. **23** And she conceived, and bore a son, and said, “God has taken away my reproach”.[5] **24** So she called his name Joseph,[6] saying, “May Jehovah add to me another son”.[7]

God enriches Jacob

30:25 Now it happened, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. **26** Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go, for you know my service that I have done for you.” **27** Then Laban said to him, “Please, if I have found favor in your eyes; I have observed the signs, and Jehovah has blessed me for your sake”. **28** And he said, “Tell me the payment you want, and I will give it”. **29** So Jacob said to him, “You know how I have

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going to Leah, preferring younger women. But God still had work for Leah to do, and He used the mandrakes to take Jacob back to her.

[1] How so; what did one thing have to do with the other?

[2] The name means: salary.

[3] The name means: dwelling place.

[4] Why is Dinah mentioned? Didn’t Jacob have other daughters? In 31:28 Laban speaks of “kissing my sons and my daughters,” and since “my sons” certainly refers to his grandsons, it is likely that “my daughters” refers to granddaughters. In fact, 37:35 mentions “all his daughters.” Dinah would play an important role later.

[5] At that time, a married woman without children was looked down on.

[6] The name means: to add.

[7] Here Rachel recognized Jehovah by name.

served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. **30** For the little that you had before I came has increased abundantly,[1] and Jehovah has blessed you at my foot.[2] And now, when shall I provide for my own house also?" **31** So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again feed and keep your flock. **32** I will go through all your flock today, taking from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb; and the spotted and speckled goats—they shall be my wages. **33** So my righteousness will testify for me in time to come, when you come to me about my wages; every goat that is not speckled and spotted and every lamb that is not black that is with me will be considered stolen."[3] **34** Then Laban said, "Yes, let it be according to your word!"[4] **35** That same day Laban took the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, each one with white spots, and each black lamb, and gave them into the hand of his sons.[5] **36** Then he put a three-day journey

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[1] Laban recognized the truth that Jacob declared (v. 27), and he did not want to lose the blessing.

[2] This is what the Text says: "at my foot". Perhaps it refers to his work, or his initiatives.

[3] How did Jacob know that all of the future offspring of the animals would have those characteristics?

[4] Laban was devious, he didn't even respect his own word; he changed the 'wages' ten times within six years (31:41)! But going against God doesn't work very well (31:42) [and not for our enemies either].

[5] Laban's sons were brothers of Leah and Rachel, and therefore adults, some perhaps of middle age. Jacob's sons were still children; the oldest was six years old. Since Jacob continued to tend Laban's flock, and since it was a three-day journey between the two flocks (verse 36), Jacob had no way of keeping an eye on what was happening to his own flock (but his wives were probably there to keep an eye on things).

between himself and Jacob,[1] and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 Then Jacob took green poplar, almond and chestnut[2] rods, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the whiteness that was in the rods. **38** And he placed the rods that he had peeled beside the containers, the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, across from them; and they conceived when they came to drink. **39** So the flocks conceived in front of the rods, and brought forth young streaked, speckled and spotted; **40** and Jacob set the young apart.[3] Also, he put the *females* of the flock with the streaked and black *males* among Laban's flock.[4] He set his own flock by itself, and did not put them with Laban's flock. **41** And it came to pass, whenever the stronger of the flock conceived, that Jacob would place the rods before the eyes of the flock, beside the troughs, that they might conceive in front of the rods. **42** But whenever the flock was weak, he did not place them. So the weaker ones were Laban’s, and the stronger ones were Jacob’s. **43** Thus the man became extremely prosperous; he had large flocks, male and female slaves, camels

[1] Well now, it seems that Laban was worried, or perhaps he was putting Jacob at a disadvantage. Three days' travel would be a respectable distance, and the text does not say in which direction, but 31:21 says that he "crossed the river", which would be the Euphrates. So the two flocks were on the same side.

[2] There is doubt as to the species of this tree.

[3] It was God who made Jacob's ruse work, apparently, as he himself acknowledged in 31:42. Even though Laban changed the 'wages' ten times, 31:41. Obviously Laban was watching everything the whole time, and tried desperately to get around God's blessing on Jacob.

[4] Since Laban changed the wages every six months, or so, there would soon be a variety of males in Laban’s flock, in spite of the separation at the beginning.

and donkeys.[1]

Jacob returns to Canaan

31:1 Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth".[2] **2** And Jacob also saw that Laban's countenance was not *favorable* toward him as before. **3** Then Jehovah said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you".[3] **4** So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock. **5** And he said to them, "I see that your father's countenance is not *favorable* toward me as before, but the God of my father has been with me. **6** And you yourselves know that I have served your father with all my might. **7** Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to do me harm. **8** If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages', then all the flocks would bear speckled. And if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages', then all the flocks would bear streaked. **9** So God took away your father's livestock and gave them to me. **10** And it happened, at the time when the flock conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male

[1] 32:14-15 tells us that the half that Jacob gave to Esau was: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milk camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls; twenty female donkeys and ten foals (if he had camels and donkeys with young, he inevitably had males too). So, he had double that when he left Paddan-Aram; around a thousand animals! And he gained all that in six years!! Now then, to have pasture for a thousand animals requires an area of respectable size. The Text says that he had slaves. Jacob certainly exchanged animals for slaves, as much as possible, precisely to get rid of Laban's sons to take care of his flocks. Donkeys are beasts of burden, and camels are too, and they would be used on the journey back to Canaan.

[2] The second half of their complaint was true.

[3] It was God who sent him back, because it was time to do so.

goats that mated with the flock were streaked, speckled, or spotted. **11** And the Angel of God said to me in the dream,[1] 'Jacob', and I said, 'Here I am'. **12** And He said, 'Lift your eyes and see: all the male goats that mate with the flock are streaked, speckled, or spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. **13** I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, where you made a vow to me.[2] Now arise, get out of this land, and return to your native land'."[3]

14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? **15** Does he not regard us as strangers? For he sold us and has 'devoured' all our money.[4] **16** For all the wealth that God took from our father[5] belongs to us and our children. So then, do everything that God has said to you." **17** Then Jacob went into action and put his sons and his wives on camels. **18** He took away all his livestock and all the possessions that he had acquired—the livestock that he had accumulated in Paddan-Aram—to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.[6] **19** Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and

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[1] What was the point of the dream? God was claiming direct responsibility for Jacob's prosperity.

[2] God mentions the vow! God had blessed him, but now He had to get him back to the land.

[3] Strictly speaking, his native land would be south of Hebron, but probably included Hebron, since both Abraham and Isaac spent time there; and God told him to go there.

[4] It has often been assumed that the reference is to the price that Jacob paid for them. But that was seven year's work for each of them. Since God prospered Laban during those fourteen years, could the reference be to that prosperity? But during the following six years God Himself transferred that prosperity to Jacob. Could the reference be to what they might have inherited from their father? That seems to be the point of the next verse.

[5] They recognized the hand of God.

[6] Isaac was living at Hebron, but Jacob took his time getting there, as I explain below.

Rachel had stolen her father's household idols.[1] **20** And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was going to run away.[2] **21** So he departed with all that he had; he arose and crossed the River,[3] and headed toward Mount Gilead.

Jacob and Laban

22 On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. **23** So he took his brothers[4] with him and followed him for seven days,[5] and overtook him in Mount Gilead. **24** (But God had come to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or bad!") **25** So Laban caught up with Jacob, who had pitched his tent in that mountain; Laban and his brothers also pitched their tent in Mount Gilead. **26** Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have deceived me and carried my daughters away like captives of the sword? **27** Why did you run away secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me? For I would have sent you away with joy and songs, with tambourine and harp. **28** Nor did you allow me to kiss my sons and daughters. You have acted foolishly! **29** There is power in my hand to harm you, but the God of your father[6] spoke to me

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[1] That was why Laban pursued them.

[2] Why 'run away'? He was still responsible for Laban's flock, and he was going to leave him 'in the lurch'. Apparently, the care did not include the shearing.

[3] The Euphrates River.

[4] The Text actually says 'brothers', not 'sons'.

[5] Jacob had a three-day start, but herding 1,000 animals he could not travel very fast. Just how Laban found out about the missing idols is not mentioned, but it was the missing idols that motivated the pursuit.

[6] The Hebrew text has 'your (plural) father', but the literal meaning is impossible. Since 'your' in English is ambiguous as to number, our versions 'hide' the problem. Perhaps it is the honorific form for 'your

last night, saying, ‘Take heed that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.’ **30** So now you have really left, because you long for your father’s house; but why did you steal my family idols?”[1]

31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid; for I thought that you might take your daughters from me by force. **32** With whomever you find your idols, let him not live. In the presence of our brothers, search for yourself whether I have anything of yours with me and take it.” For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. **33** So Laban went into Jacob’s tent, and into Leah’s tent, and into the tent of the two maidservants, but did not find anything. Then he left Leah’s tent and went into Rachel’s tent. **34** Now Rachel had taken the idols and put them in the saddle of her camel and sat on them. And Laban felt all over the tent, but did not find anything. **35** And she said to her father, “Do not be angry, my lord, that I cannot get up before you; for I am in the manner of women.”[2] So he searched but did not find the idols.

36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban; Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have so furiously pursued me? **37** Although you have felt around all my belongings, what have you found of all the things in your house? Set it here

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(singular)’ (Rebekah was Laban’s sister). In the Septuagint it is ‘your (singular)’.

[1] That was the problem, the reason for the costly expedition: the family idols. If it were not for the disappearance of those idols, Laban would have celebrated Jacob's departure, as he himself said. At that time and in that region, the possession of such idols by a son-in-law gave him the right of the firstborn son in the inheritance left by his father-in-law, to the detriment of his father-in-law's own children. That was why Laban went after them. Naturally, Jacob did not appreciate being accused of such a crime.

[2] She claimed to be menstruating.

before my brothers and your brothers and let them judge between us both. **38** These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your she-goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. **39** I did not bring you what was torn to pieces; I replaced it. You required at my hand both what was stolen by day and what was stolen by night. **40** My case was like this: the heat consumed me by day, and the cold by night; and my sleep fled from my eyes. **41** Thus I have been in your house twenty years; fourteen years I served you for your two daughters, and six years for your flock; and you have changed my wages ten times! **42** If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear[1] of Isaac had not been with me, surely you would now have sent me away empty-handed.[2] God has seen my affliction and the work of my hands, and He rebuked you last night."

43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, and the sons are my sons, and the flocks are my flocks; everything you see is mine.[3] But what can I do today for these daughters of mine, or for their children whom they have borne? **44** Now therefore come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be for a witness between you and me." **45** Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. **46** And Jacob said to his brothers, "Gather stones". So they took stones and made a heap of them; and they ate there beside the heap. **47** Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.[4] **48** Then Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today". Therefore it was called Galeed, **49** and also Mizpah,[5] because he said, "May Jehovah watch between you and me when we are

[1] 'Fear' was a synonym for 'God'.

[2] If Laban could have had his way, that is what he would have done.

[3] Laban lied; Jacob had bought everything.

[4] Both names mean: heap of witness.

[5] The name means: watchtower.

separated from each other. **50** If you harm my daughters or take wives besides my daughters, while no one is with us[1]—remember, God is a witness between you and me." **51** Laban also said to Jacob, "Look at this heap and the pillar that I have set up between you and me. **52** This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not go past this heap toward you, and that you will not go past this heap and this pillar toward me, for harm.[2] **53** May the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor and the God of their father,[3] judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. **54** Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his brothers to eat bread; and they ate bread and spent the night on the mountain. **55** Laban got up early in the morning and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

Jacob and God

32:1 Then Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. **2** When Jacob saw them, he said, "This camp is God's". And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.[4]

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[1] The reference may be to a mediator, or a go-between.

[2] Laban was still suspicious. The unavoidable fact was that his idols were no longer in their place in his house. And they disappeared exactly when Jacob left. 2 + 2 = 4. Jacob could have buried the idols, to use them later. The whole procedure was to ensure that Jacob would not use the idols against Laban's sons.

[3] Why did Laban appeal to the God of their grandfathers, and even their great-grandfather? In verse 49 he appealed directly to Jehovah. It seems that they knew who Jehovah was, even if they did not associate with Him much. But since Jehovah was Jacob's God, Laban was trying to constrain him with this appeal.

[4] The name means: two bands–there was the physical band, which was Jacob's, and the spiritual band, which was God's. Since Jacob had already seen angels at Bethel, he recognized them. But why did God have angels meet Jacob? Perhaps to encourage him and confirm to him that he was doing the right thing.

3 Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to Esau his brother, to the land of Seir, the territory of Edom. **4** And he commanded them, saying, "Thus shall you say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: "I have sojourned with Laban and remained until now. **5** I have oxen, donkeys, and flocks, and male and female slaves; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight".'" **6** The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau; and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him!" **7** Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; so he divided the people who were with him into two companies, as also the flocks, the herds and the camels. **8** And he said, "If Esau comes to one company and attacks it, the other company will escape".

9 Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will do you good'.[1] **10** I am not worthy of all the mercies and all the faithfulness that you have bestowed on your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff,[2] and now I have become two companies. **11** Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me,[3] and the mother with the children. **12** You yourself said, 'I will surely do you good, and I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude'."

13 He stayed there that night. Then he took from what he had a present for his brother Esau: **14** two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams;

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[1] By 'reminding' God of His promise, he was calling on Him for protection.

[2] Jacob affirms that he went to Laban empty-handed.

[3] The verb could have the meaning of kill, but Esau would have no reason to kill women and children, even if he killed Jacob. However, the next verse could imply the killing of the children.

15 thirty milk camels with their young; forty cows and ten bulls; twenty female donkeys and ten colts. **16** He delivered them to his slaves, each drove by itself, and said to his slaves, "Pass on ahead of me and put some space between drove and drove". **17** He commanded the first one, saying, "When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, 'Whose are you, and where are you going, and whose are these in front of you?' **18** Then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's, who says, "I am sending a present to my lord Esau". And behold, he also is behind us.'" **19** So also he commanded the second and the third, and all who followed the droves,[1] saying, "You shall speak this same word to Esau when you find him. **20** And you shall also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us'." For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me". **21** So the present went on ahead of him, but he spent that night in the camp.

22 That same night[2] he arose and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok.[3] **23** He took them and brought them across the stream—he had sent over that which he had.[4]

24 So Jacob was left alone;[5] and a Man wrestled with him until it began to dawn. **25** And when He saw that He did not

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[1] There were at least three 'droves', but possibly several more. The idea was to make a favorable impression on Esau, and it worked.

[2] It seems that Jacob made that crossing at night, which would have been a strange procedure. Perhaps God had already presented Himself to him, and he knew that he would have to face Him alone.

[3] The Jabbok is a small tributary of the Jordan River on the eastern side. The stream could have presented a small obstacle to Esau, who was coming from the south, but to placate Esau, Jacob could not use it.

[4] A good part of his possessions had already gone toward Esau.

[5] He must have helped the women and children across, but then returned to the north side of the stream alone.

prevail against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob's thigh became out of joint as He wrestled with him. **26** And He said, "Let me go, for the dawn has come".[1] But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me".[2] **27** So He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob". **28** Then He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel,[3] for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed”. **29** Then Jacob asked and said, “Please tell me your name”. And He said, “Why do you ask my name?”[4] And He blessed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel,[5] “Because I have seen God face to face, and I am still alive!” **31** And the sun rose on him as he went on from Peniel; and he limped because of his thigh. **32** Therefore the children of Israel do not eat the tendon that is on the hollow of the thigh to this day, because He struck the hollow of Jacob’s thigh, the tendon.

Jacob and Esau

33:1 Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there was Esau, coming with four hundred men! Then he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. **2** He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. **3** But he himself

[1] Evidently Jacob was hanging on to Him.

[2] Obviously God limited Himself to the strength of an ordinary man, or Jacob would not have been able to fight with Him. But the picture is curious; why would God do such a thing? God had a special interest in Jacob, and wanted to change his name. By wrestling, Jacob lived up to the name Israel.

[3] The name means: he who struggles with God.

[4] So why did Jacob ask for the name? Perhaps he wanted confirmation that it was God.

[5] The name means: the face of God.

passed on ahead of them[1] and bowed down to the ground seven times until he came to his brother. **4** Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, falling on his neck and kissing him, and they wept.[2] **5** Then he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children with whom God has blessed your servant". **6** Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. **7** And Leah also came near with her children and bowed down. Then Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed down.

8 Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all these droves that I met?" And he said, "To find favor in the eyes of my lord". **9** But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; let what you have be yours". **10** Then Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your eyes, accept my gift from my hand; since I have seen your face, as if I had seen the face of a god, and you are pleased with me. **11** Please, accept my blessing that has been brought to you, because God has favored me, and because I have enough." And he urged him until he accepted it. **12** Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way, and I will go before you". **13** But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows

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[1] Jacob did not hide behind the women and children; he was out in front. The fact that he limped may have helped—why beat up on a cripple?

[2] Jacob and Esau certainly spoke much more than is recorded in the text. Jacob certainly asked for news of his parents, and it is more than likely that Rebekah was already dead. Sarah died at the age of 127, and Rebekah was at least 120 when Jacob fled, and he had been away for twenty years. This explains why Jacob was in no hurry to see his father. It is possible that Jacob was bitter toward his father: if Isaac had recognized what God had told Rebekah, and the fact that Esau had sold the birthright, and had not tried to bless Esau anyway, Jacob would not have gone through the distress and humiliation that he did. In fact, it seems that Isaac was in his last ten years when Jacob finally showed up.

that the children are tender, and that I have ewes and cows that are nursing; and if they drive them hard just one day, they will all die. **14** Please let my lord go on ahead of his servant, and I will go by stages, little by little, according to the pace of the cattle that go before me, and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."[1] **15** And Esau said, "Then let me leave some of those who are with me with you". But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord." **16** So Esau returned that day to Seir by the same road. **17** And Jacob traveled to Succoth, built himself a house, and made shelters for his livestock; therefore he called the name of that place Succoth.[2]

18 That was how Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan,[3] after he left Paddan-Aram; and he camped within sight of the city. **19** And he

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[1] Jacob had no intention of going to Seir; he just wanted to be free from Esau.

[2] The name means: shelters. We do not know how long Jacob stayed in Succoth, but if he built a house for himself and made shelters for his livestock, he certainly stayed there for some time; perhaps several years. In fact, perhaps a good many years, considering Dinah's age. When they arrived in Succoth, Reuben, the firstborn, could not have been more than thirteen years old. 30:21 says that Dinah was born "after" Zebulun, Leah's sixth son; so Dinah may not have been even five years old. To attract Shechem's attention, she would have had to be a fully developed teenager, probably at least fifteen years old. Likewise, Simeon and Levi would not have been more than twelve and eleven when they arrived in Succoth, but to do what they did, 34:25, they would have had to be men in their prime. They stayed in Succoth for at least ten years, but I imagine it was between thirteen and fifteen. The time they spent near Shechem before sacking the city was probably not long. For a detailed discussion of Dinah's age, please see the Appendix.

[3] In 31:13 God had told Jacob to return to his native land, which was Canaan. The Text emphasizes that he finally got there, by crossing the Jordan (Succoth was on the East side).

bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. **20** And he set up an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.[1]

Dinah and Shechem

34:1 Dinah, Leah's daughter, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.[2] **2** When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her and violated her. **3** His soul became attached to Dinah, Jacob's daughter, and he loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. **4** So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get this young woman for me as a wife."[3] **5** When Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah,[4] his sons were in the field with the livestock; Jacob kept quiet until they came. **6** Then Hamor, Shechem's father, went out to Jacob to speak with him. **7** And Jacob's sons came in from the field when they heard it.[5] The men were indignant and very angry, because he had brought

[1] The name means: God, the God of Israel. Jacob took his new name, Israel, and claimed a relationship with God—for himself, but perhaps for his descendants as well.

[2] It appears that she went out alone, which was not a good idea, and perhaps not 'correct'. It would be natural for her to want to make friends with other girls, as long as it was done in the right way. However, she certainly did not expect to be the victim of an impetuous action and be taken captive.

[3] Verse 26 says that they took Dinah from Shechem's house, which means that he kept her, not letting her return home.

[4] If Shechem had caught Dinah out in the open, there must have been witnesses. When Dinah did not return, her mother would have wanted to know why. Such a thing would certainly be talked about. Jacob would have heard about it before long.

[5] Jacob certainly sent someone running to call his sons.

shame on Israel[1] by sleeping with Jacob's daughter, a thing which should not be done in that way.[2]

8 Then Hamor spoke with them,[3] saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him as a wife. **9** And intermarry with us by giving us your daughters and taking our daughters for yourselves. **10** And live with us, and the land will be before you; live and trade in it, and acquire property in it." **11** Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give whatever you say to me. **12** You may greatly increase the dowry and the gift that you require of me, and I will give whatever you say to me; only give me the young woman as a wife."[4] **13** Then Jacob's sons answered Shechem and Hamor his father with deceit,[5] because he had defiled Dinah their sister. **14** And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to an uncircumcised man; for that would be a disgrace to us. **15** Only on this condition will we consent to you: If you will become like us, having every male among you be circumcised, **16** then we will give you our daughters, and we will take your daughters for ourselves; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. **17** But if you will not listen to us and be circumcised, we will take our daughter and leave."

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[1] Here we have the first use of the name 'Israel' to refer to the community. Yes, because "daughter of Jacob" occurs in the next phrase.

[2] There was a correct way to get a wife, which Shechem did not follow.

[3] The sons arrived at the same time as Hamor, or perhaps a little earlier. Hamor was accompanied by his son.

[4] Shechem did not try to escape his responsibility; he had been overcome by passion, but he took full responsibility for the consequences.

[5] What was the "deceit"? They said that they would agree with Hamor's proposal, if their condition was met, but they had no intention of doing it.

18 Now their words pleased Hamor and Shechem his son.
19 And the young man did not hesitate to do this, because he
loved Jacob's daughter; and he was the most noble of all his
father's household. **20** Then Hamor and his son Shechem
went to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of the city,
saying, **21** "These men are at peace with us; so let them dwell
in this land and trade in it, for indeed the land is large enough
for them. Let us take their daughters as wives for ourselves,
and let us give our daughters to them. **22** But the men will
only consent to live with us, so that we may become one
people, if every male among us is circumcised, as they are
circumcised. **23** Will not their cattle, their goods, and all their
beasts of burden be ours?[1] So let us consent to them, and
they will dwell with us." **24** And all who went out of the gate
of his city heeded Hamor and his son Shechem; every male
was circumcised, of all who went out of the gate of his city.[2]

25 On the third day, while they were suffering, two of
Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took
his sword and went into the city, which was unguarded, and
killed every male. **26** They killed Hamor and Shechem his son
with the sword and took Dinah out of Shechem's house and
left. **27** Jacob's sons came upon the dead and plundered the
city,[3] because they had defiled their sister. **28** They took their
flocks, their herds, and their donkeys, both in the city and in
the field. **29** They took all the children and the women as

[1] Obviously Hamor hoped to gain the upper hand. He thought he could impose himself on Jacob.

[2] Verse 29 makes it clear that this did not include the children. The expression seems to refer to those who were old enough to vote. It was necessary for them to be consulted, and for them to agree to the proposal.

[3] Although only two perpetrated the massacre, all participated in the looting.

captives.[1] They plundered all the goods and everything in the houses. **30** Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have made trouble for me by making me stink to the inhabitants of the land, to the Canaanites and Perizzites. Since I am few in number, if they gather together against me and attack me, I will be destroyed, both I and my household." **31** But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a prostitute?"

Jacob Goes to Bethel, Bethlehem and Hebron

35:1 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there,[2] and build an altar there to God who appeared to you when you fled from Esau your brother." **2** Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves and change your clothes. **3** Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will build an altar there to God who answered me in the day of my distress[3] and has been with me on the way I have gone." **4** So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods[4] that were in their possession, along with the earrings that were in their ears;[5] and Jacob hid them under the oak tree

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[1] So what did they do with the women? They married them; where else would they find a wife for so many men? In Acts 7:15-16 Stephen states that Jacob's sons were buried in Shechem. Joshua 24:32 explicitly states that Joseph's bones were buried there. Since that was where they got their wives and possessions, it would be appropriate for them to be buried there.

[2] Jacob went to Bethel, but did not 'dwell' there; he seems to have gone south without much delay.

[3] He was fleeing for his life, taking nothing with him. He was definitely in a bad way. If God "answered", Jacob must have asked for help.

[4] Rachel must have given up the family idols she had stolen from her father. Since Jacob had sworn to Laban back in Gilead that he would not use them, they were no longer important.

[5] Why are the earrings mentioned? Perhaps they had some religious significance.

that was near Shechem.[1] **5** Then they set out; and the terror of God fell on the surrounding cities, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.[2] **6** And Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), in the land of Canaan, he and all the people with him. **7** And he built an altar there, and called the place El-Bethel,[3] because God had revealed Himself to him there, when he fled from his brother. **8** Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse,[4] died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak tree; and he called its name Allon-bacuth.[5]

9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, after he had come from Paddan-Aram,[6] and blessed him. **10** And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; no longer shall your name be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name". So He called his name Israel.[7] **11** God also said to him, "I am Almighty God;[8] be fruitful and multiply; a nation, even a company of nations, shall come from you, and kings shall come from your loins. **12** And the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and I will give the land to your descendants after you." **13** And God

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[1] It must have been a special tree.

[2] That was a direct act of God, to protect Israel (the news of the massacre would have gotten around).

[3] The name means: the God of the house of God. It was Jacob himself who had given the name Bethel to the place when he was fleeing from Esau, and God had revealed Himself to him for the first time. Since then, God had spoken to him several times, and now Jacob knew Him better, and he added to the name.

[4] This is curious; Rebekah's own death is not mentioned, but that of her nurse is. I believe we may deduce that Rebekah had died, and probably a good while earlier. In any case, we know that Rebekah was buried at Machpelah (49:31).

[5] The name means: the oak of weeping.

[6] God had spoken to him in Shechem, 35:1, but here He appeared, as He had done once before, 28:13. He was visible. Succoth was on the east side of the Jordan; finally Jacob was within the land of Canaan.

[7] God had already done this at Peniel; why did He do it again?

[8] In Hebrew it is: El-Shaddai.

went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him. **14** And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. **15** And Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.[1]

16 Then they departed from Bethel.[2] When there was some distance to come to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth, and her labor was hard.[3] **17** And it came to pass, as she was having hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also". **18** And as her soul was departing (for she died), she called his name Ben-oni;[4] but his father called him Benjamin.[5] **19** So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). **20** And Jacob set up a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.[6]

21 Then Israel moved on[7] and pitched his tent beyond Migdal-eder.[8] **22** And it came to pass, while Israel dwelt in that land,[9] that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.[10]

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[1] Jacob had given that name to the place many years before, and it would be natural for him to repeat it here.

[2] We are not told how long he stayed there, but it probably was not very long.

[3] She was probably fifteen to twenty years older than when she had Joseph.

[4] The name means: son of my sorrow.

[5] The name means: son of my right hand.

[6] It was only about 20 miles from there to Machpelah; why did Jacob not take Rachel's body there? We are not told. Isaac was living there. Was Jacob avoiding him?

[7] Here the name changes from Jacob to Israel, but both names remained in use until Jacob's death.

[8] The name means: tower of the flock.

[9] It sounds like he stayed there for a while.

[10] He mentioned it when he gave his sons his final blessing, 49:4.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. **23** The sons of Leah:
Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and
Zebulun. **24** The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin. **25** The
sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant: Dan and Naphtali.
26 The sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant: Gad and Asher.
These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in
Paddan-Aram.[1] **27** And Jacob came to his father Isaac at
Mamre, or Kiriath-Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham
and Isaac sojourned. **28** Now the days of Isaac were one
hundred and eighty years. **29** And Isaac breathed his last and
died, and was gathered to his people, old and full of days.
And Esau and Jacob, his sons, buried him.[2]

The generations of Esau

36:1 These are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. **2** Esau
took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the
daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of
Anah, the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite, **3** and Base-
math the daughter of Ishmael, sister of Nebaioth. **4** Adah
bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Base-math bore Reuel. **5** And Aholi-
bamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These are the sons of
Esau, who were born to him in the land of Canaan. **6** Then
Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the
members of his household, his cattle and all his beasts of
burden, and all the goods that he had acquired in the land of
Canaan, and went to a land far from Jacob his brother. **7** For
their possessions were so great that they could not live toge-
ther; the land of their sojournings could not support them

[1] Strictly speaking, there were eleven, since Benjamin was born in Canaan. The account gives a round number, although with Dinah there would be twelve.

[2] He was buried at Machpelah, which was part of Hebron, where he was living at the time.

because of their livestock.[1] **8** So Esau lived in Mount Seir; Esau is Edom.

9 These are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. **10** These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel the son of Esau's wife Base-math. **11** The sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. **12** Timna was the concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. Those were the sons of Esau's wife Adah. **13** The sons of Reuel were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. Those were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath. **14** These were the sons of Esau's wife Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the granddaughter of Zibeon. She bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam and Korah.

15 These were the chiefs among the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn: chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, **16** chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief

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[1] Where in the family history can we place this account? Verses 2–5 give the 'hint', relating what happened "in the land of Canaan." Isaac was 60 years old when the twins were born (25:26). Esau married at 40 (26:34), and Isaac was 100. That Isaac was 137 when Jacob fled is an inference based on dates given for Joseph and Jacob; thus, the twins were 77 years old, and Esau had been married for 37 years, and certainly had grown children. 28:9 adds that Esau took a third wife, while he was still living near his parents, and therefore in Canaan. After the blessing, the family atmosphere was certainly difficult. Rebekah did not like Esau, and he liked her even less. Isaac had stated that his possible death was the reason he wanted to give the blessing (27:2). And Esau was waiting for that death in order to kill Jacob (27:41). Since Jacob had received the blessing of the firstborn, most of his father's estate would go to him, and Isaac was wealthy. No one imagined that Jacob would take 20 years to return; after the necessary interval, he could appear at any time. When Jacob returned, Esau was already in Seir. Since Isaac took a long time to die, at some point Esau had left with everything he had and settled in Seir; since Seir was located across the Jordan and south of the Dead Sea, it was not part of Canaan.

Amalek. Those were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah. **17** These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. Those were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. **18** These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: chief Jeush, chief Jaalam, chief Korah. They were the chiefs of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. **19** Those were the sons of Esau (he is Edom), and those were their chiefs.

20 These were the sons of Seir the Horite,[1] who lived in that land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, **21** Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. They were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom. **22** The sons of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; Lotan's sister was Timna. **23** The sons of Shobal were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam. **24** The sons of Zibeon were Aiah and Anah. (This was the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness while he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.) **25** The children of Anah were Dishon and Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah. **26** The sons of Dishon were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Cheran. **27** The sons of Ezer were Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan. **28** The sons of Dishan were Uz and Aram. **29** These were the chiefs of the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, **30** chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. They were the chiefs of the Horites according to their chiefdoms in the land of Seir.

31 These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the Israelites.[2] **32** Bela the son

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[1] The Horites were a race that was spread throughout many regions. They were obviously already in Seir when Esau arrived there, for they were the ones who gave the place its name. Presumably, as time went on, the two peoples began to mix and together became the Edomites.

[2] Why was this information included in the Record? It was natural for the Edomites to organize themselves in this way, but the King of

of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. **33** Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. **34** Jobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. **35** Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Avith. **36** Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. **37** Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. **38** Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. **39** Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead; and the name of his city was Pau—his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the granddaughter of Mezahab.

40 These were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families, according to their places, by name:[1] chief Timnah, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth, **41** chief Aholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon, **42** chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar, **43** chief Magdiel, chief Iram. They were the chiefs of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

Joseph is introduced

37:1 Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.[2] **2** These are the generations of Jacob. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he was tending the flock with his brothers. The young man was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And

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Israel was God, a theocracy. When the people asked for a king, like other peoples, Samuel was not pleased, and God stated that it was He whom the people rejected (1 Samuel 8:5-7).

[1] This list of chiefs is different from that in verses 15-19.

[2] Hebrew narratives follow a topical, not a chronological sequence. At the end of chapter 35, Jacob is already in the land. Chapter 36 gives the genealogy of Esau, that has nothing to do with Jacob. From verse 2 onward, the topic here is Joseph.

Joseph gave a bad report about them to their father.[1] **3** Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was a son of his old age;[2] and he made a special garment for him.[3] **4** His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all of them, so they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

The Dreams

5 Joseph had a dream and told it to his brothers, so they hated him even more.[4] **6** He said to them, "Please listen to this dream that I have dreamed: **7** There we were, binding sheaves in the field; then, my sheaf rose up and stood upright, and your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf!" **8** So his brothers said to him, "Will you really reign over us? Will you actually rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. **9** Then Joseph had another dream and told it to his brothers. He said, "Listen, I have had another dream: indeed, the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me!" **10** And he told it to his father, as well as his brothers, and his father rebuked him and

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[1] This probably happened in Succoth, near the end of their stay there. Naturally, those four (Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher) would not like the 'tattletale'.

[2] Benjamin had not yet been born, as Joseph's second dream makes clear.

[3] The versions translate the phrase in various ways, but the 'point' is that Israel did it only for Joseph, showing that he valued Joseph more than the others (which the others didn't like, of course). Israel acted on the basis of his emotions, against common sense, and the result was bad. When we act on the basis of our emotions, against common sense, it will produce negative results. If we follow our emotions against God's revealed will, the results will certainly be bad.

[4] But why tell his brothers about his dream? It would have been better to keep quiet! Being a spoiled child doesn't necessarily give you good sense. But on the other hand, why did God give him those dreams? It was the dreams that angered the brothers to the point that they determined to get rid of Joseph, and God wanted him in Egypt.

said to him, “What dream is this that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother[1] and your brothers really come and bow down to the ground before you?” **11** His brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

12 His brothers went to Shechem to feed their father's flock.[2] **13** Then Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock near Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." So he said to him, "Here I am". **14** He said to him, "Go now, see how your brothers and the flocks are doing, and bring me back a report".[3] So he sent him from the valley of Hebron,[4] and he went to Shechem. **15** There a man saw him wandering around in the field. So the man asked him, "What are you looking for?" **16** And he said, "I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are feeding their flocks". **17** The man said, "They have gone from here; for I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan'." So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.[5]

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[1] For Jacob to express himself in this way, Rachel was still alive. In that event, Benjamin hadn’t been born yet, but in Egypt, when they bowed down, there were eleven. However, in Egypt, Rachel was not there. I take the point to be that the whole family would be under his authority, as it indeed was.

[2] From Hebron to Shechem was close to 100 km, as the crow flies, but over accidented terrain. That was a long way to drive a flock of sheep! Had they run out of pasture around Hebron? They had sacked the town of Shechem, and left it destitute; did they want to see what it was like, or if other people had moved in? And why did they go on to Dothan? For some reason they were restless. On the other hand, God wanted Joseph in Egypt, and the Ishmaelites would pass by Dothan, but not by Shechem.

[3] His concern was natural; they had probably been gone for quite a while. That they went on to Dothan from Shechem indicates that they were not in any hurry to go home.

[4] After his father’s death, Israel stayed on in Hebron.

[5] Dothan was another 30 some km to the north of Shechem.

The Plot

18 Now when they saw him afar off, before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. **19** And they said to one another, "Here comes that lord of dreams! **20** Come on, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits! And we will say, 'A wild beast has devoured him'; and let us see what will become of his dreams!" **21** But Reuben heard it, and rescued him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not take his life". **22** Reuben said to them, "Do not shed blood; throw him into this pit in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hands and return him to his father. **23** So it came to pass, when Joseph came to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his special garment, the garment that he was wearing.[1] **24** And they took him and threw him into the pit; the pit was empty and had no water. **25** Then they sat down to eat bread;[2] and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and there was a caravan of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, that were carrying spices, balm and myrrh, taking them down to Egypt.

26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What good will it do us if we kill our brother and hide his blood? **27** Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let us not lay a hand on him, for he is our brother, our flesh." And his brothers agreed.[3] **28** So they lifted Joseph out of the pit, and as the Midianite[4]

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[1] Now why was Joseph wearing his special garment to meet his brothers? That was like waving a red cloth in the face of a bull! He would naturally wear it in the presence of his father, but there was no need to wear it on a long trip. He evidently thought that he was more important than his brothers and was flaunting his privilege. Being sold as a slave got rid of that attitude.

[2] Their cruelty to Joseph didn't bother their appetite!

[3] God used Judah to save Joseph's life, but also to save all of theirs, in the future.

[4] Midian was the son of Abraham and Keturah, just as Ishmael was the son of Abraham and Hagar. It seems that in the region of Gilead the two peoples mixed, using the two names: Ishmaelites and Midianites.

merchants were passing by, they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29 Then Reuben went back to the pit, but Joseph was not there! So he tore his clothes, **30** and went back to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone; and I, where can I go?"[1] **31** So they took Joseph's special garment, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the garment in the blood. **32** Then they took the garment and brought it to their father and said, "We have found this; see if it is your son's garment". **33** And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's garment! A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!" **34** Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. **35** And all his sons and all his daughters[2] rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. He said, "I will go down to Sheol[3] mourning for my son!" Thus his father wept for him.

36 The Midianites[4] had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.

The case of Judah

38:1 It happened about that time that Judah went away from his brothers and went to stay with a man of Adullam, whose name was Hirah. **2** And Judah saw there a daughter of a Canaanite named Shua; and he took her and went in to her.

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[1] Obviously Ruben was not present when they sold Joseph.

[2] Jacob obviously had a variety of daughters, but only one, Dinah, is mentioned.

[3] Sheol in Hebrew, and Hades in Greek, is the name of the 'waiting room' where the spirits of the dead await the Final Judgment. The Lord Jesus described the place in Luke 16:19-31. For a more detailed explanation, see my article, 'Hades is not Hell'.

[4] The Hebrew text has 'Medanites'; it turns out that Medan was another son of Keturah, a brother of Midian. Perhaps they also mixed with the Ishmaelites. It would have been natural for them to mix with the Midianites.

3 And she conceived and bore a son, and his father called his name Er. **4** And she conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. **5** And she bore yet again another son, and she called his name Shelah;[1] and Judah was at Chezib when she bore him.

6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. **7** But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah, so Jehovah killed him.[2] **8** Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and produce offspring for your brother". **9** But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; and it happened that whenever he went in to his brother's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground, so that he would not give offspring to his brother. **10** Now what he did was wicked in the sight of Jehovah, so He killed him also.[3] **11** Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up". For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers".[4] So Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

12 After a long time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died.[5] When Judah was comforted, he went to his sheep-

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[1] Curiously, the father named the first son, but the mother named the next two.

[2] This statement makes clear that Jehovah pays attention to what happens down here and is prepared to intervene in human affairs. However, Er must have been unusually bad, but we are not told what he did.

[3] In Deuteronomy 25:7-10 the punishment for refusing to produce offspring for a brother who died childless was public humiliation, not death; and that was under the severity of the Mosaic Law. Genesis 9:6 states the crime that called for the death penalty, between the Flood and the Law.

[4] Apparently Judah figured that Tamar was responsible for the death of his sons, in some way.

[5] Judah was left without a wife, which helps to understand what he did next.

shearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. **13** And Tamar was told, "Look, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep".[1] **14** So she took off her widow's clothes, covered herself with a veil, and disguised herself. And she sat at the entrance of Enaim, which is on the way to Timnah, for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife.[2] **15** And Judah saw her and thought she was a prostitute, because she had covered her face. **16** And he turned aside to her by the way and said, "Come now, let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me so that you may come in to me?" **17** And he said, “I will send a young goat from the flock”. So she said, “Will you give me a pledge until you send it?” **18** And he said, “What pledge shall I give you?” And she said, “Your signet with its cord, and your staff in your hand.” So he gave them to her and went in to her; and she conceived by him. **19** Then she got up and left, took off the veil from her face, and resumed her widow’s clothes.

20 And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman’s hand; but he could not find her. **21** So he asked the men of that place, saying, “Where is the prostitute who was at the entrance of Enaim by the way?” And they said, “There was no prostitute here”. **22** Then he returned to Judah and said, “I did not find her; and also the men of that place said, ‘There was no prostitute here’.” **23** Then Judah said, “Let her have the pledge, that we not be put to shame. I did send this young goat, but you did not find her.”

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[1] That must have been done on purpose, by someone who knew the family.

[2] According to the culture of that time, this was a legitimate hope on her part, which Judah recognized in verse 26.

24 About three months later, Judah was told, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has committed adultery, and she is pregnant through prostitution". So Judah said, "Bring her out and let her be burned!"[1] **25** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, saying, "I am pregnant by the man to whom these things belong". And she said, "Please determine whose these things are: this signet with its cord, and this staff". **26** Judah acknowledged them and said, "She is more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son". And he never knew her again. **27** And it came to pass at the time of her giving birth that twins were in her womb. **28** And as she was giving birth, one put out his hand; and the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first". **29** But then he drew back his hand, and it was his brother who came out! So she said, "How did you force your way out?" Therefore his name was called Perez.[2] **30** Then his brother came out, who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and his name was called Zerah.[3]

Joseph in Potiphar's house

39:1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites,[4] who had brought him down there. **2** And Jehovah was with Joseph and made him a successful man; and he lived in the house of his Egyptian

[1] How cruel! However, she was not killed, when she proved that Judah himself was the father.

[2] The name means: breakthrough. It was through Perez that the Messiah came, Matthew 1:3. Tamar is one of four women included in Christ's genealogy as given by Matthew. All four represented some violation, perhaps to emphasize the grace of God. He is always recycling.

[3] The name means: scarlet.

[4] It was God's will that Joseph be bought by that man, so that he would end up in the right prison.

master. **3** And his master saw that Jehovah was with him, and that Jehovah made all that he did prosper in his hand.[1] **4** So Joseph found favor in his eyes, and served him; and he made him overseer of his house, and put into his hand all that he had. **5** And it came to pass, from the time that he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that Jehovah blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of Jehovah was on all that he had, in the house and in the field. **6** So he left all that he had in Joseph's hand, and knew nothing of what he had, except for the bread that he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in body and appearance.

7 And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph, and said, "Lie with me".[2] **8** But he refused, and said to his master's wife, “Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has given all that he has into my hand. **9** There is no one greater in this house than I, neither has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”[3] **10** So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not listen to her, to lie with her, or to be with her. **11** But it happened on a certain day, that he went into the house to do his work; and none of the men of the house was there inside; **12** and she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me". But he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and went outside. **13** So

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[1] But what could Potiphar have known about Jehovah? How did he know that it was Jehovah who blessed Joseph? He sensed that some supernatural power was with Joseph, and Moses, writing centuries later, gave that Power His proper name. We are not told how much time elapsed between Joseph’s arrival and his promotion.

[2] She certainly had an easy life, with servants to do all the housework, and Joseph was attractive. So what happened, happened.

[3] He would not only be sinning against his master, but mainly against God.

when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, **14** she called to the men of her house and said to them, “See, my husband has brought in a Hebrew to mock us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice.[1] **15** And it happened, when he heard that I raised my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside.” **16** So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. **17** Then she spoke to him in the same way, saying, “The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me. **18** And it happened, when I raised my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside.”

Joseph in prison

39:19 So it was, when his master heard his wife’s words, which she spoke to him, saying, “Your slave did to me according to these words”, that his anger was aroused. **20** Then Joseph's master took him and put him in the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined;[2] and there he stayed. **21** But Jehovah was with Joseph, and shewed him kindness, and gave him favor in the sight of the prison warden. **22** And the warden committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; whatever they did there, he was responsible. **23** The warden did not check on anything

[1] How come no one heard that loud cry?

[2] God used that bad woman to put Joseph in the right place, for the sequence of following events. She put her husband in a tight spot; he may very well have had his doubts about what really happened, but he had to keep up appearances. He must have advised the warden about Joseph, which is why he treated him differently. And he certainly wasn't pleased to have lost God's blessing on his home and business. Psalm 76:10 says that God uses the wrath of man to His own glory.

that was under Joseph's care,[1] because Jehovah was with him, and Jehovah prospered whatever he did.

40:1 It came to pass after those things, that the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. **2** And Pharaoh was very angry with his two officers, with the chief cupbearer and with the chief baker. **3** So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph was confined. **4** And the captain of the guard put Joseph in charge of them, and he ministered to them; and they were in custody many days. **5** Then the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night,[2] each dream having its own interpretation. **6** And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them and saw that they were sad. **7** So he asked Pharaoh's officers, who were with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, "Why are your faces sad today?" **8** And they said to him, "We each have had a dream, but there is no one to interpret it." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations come from God? Then tell me!"[3]

9 Then the chief cupbearer told Joseph his dream and said to him, "In my dream there was a vine before me. **10** On the vine there were three branches; when it budded, its blossoms came out, and its clusters ripened into grapes. **11** Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." **12** Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: The three branches represent three days.

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[1] Like Potiphar, the warden sensed that some supernatural power was with Joseph.

[2] That they both had their dream on the same night was obviously from God; in fact, the dreams themselves were from God.

[3] Evidently Joseph expected God to give him the interpretations. Had God prepared him in some way?

13 In three days' time Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your position, and you will give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, according to the former custom when you were his cupbearer.[1] **14** But remember me when it goes well with you; and please show me kindness and make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. **15** For I was indeed stolen away from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve to be put in this dungeon."[2]

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also dreamed, and there were three white baskets on my head. **17** And in the uppermost basket were all kinds of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds ate it from the basket on my head." **18** So Joseph answered and said, "This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets represent three days. **19** In three days' time Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat away your flesh from you."[3] **20** So it happened, on the third day, Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker in the midst of his servants. **21** He restored the chief cupbearer to his office as cupbearer, and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. **22** But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. **23** However, the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.[4]

Joseph and Pharaoh

41:1 Now it came to pass, after two full years, that Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he was standing by the river.[5] **2** And

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[1] God gave him the interpretation immediately.

[2] Even though God had used Joseph in the prison, he wanted to get out, which was natural.

[3] Joseph did nothing to soften the message!

[4] That was typical of human nature without God.

[5] The Nile.

then, seven cows, well-favored and fat-fleshed, came up out of the river; and they fed in the meadow. **3** And then, seven other cows came up out of the river after them, ugly and emaciated, and stood beside the first cows on the river's bank. **4** Then the ugly and emaciated cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows! Then Pharaoh awoke. **5** Then he slept and dreamed again; and behold, seven heads of grain, plump and healthy, grew up on one stalk. **6** And then, seven thin heads, scorched by the east wind, grew up after them. **7** And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads! Then Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, it was a dream. **8** And it came to pass in the morning, that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called all the magicians of Egypt, and all his wise men; and Pharaoh told them his dreams: but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

9 Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, "I must now confess my neglect.[1] **10** Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, me and the chief baker. **11** And we each had a dream the same night, he and I, each dream having its own interpretation. **12** And a young Hebrew man was there with us, a slave of the captain of the guard. And we told them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; he interpreted to each man according to his dream. **13** And it happened just as he interpreted to us: he restored me to my position, and him he hanged!"

14 Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon. He shaved, changed his clothes and came in to Pharaoh. **15** So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it; but I have heard it said about you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it". **16** Joseph answered Pharaoh,

[1] The neglect of having forgotten Joseph, his request.

“Not I; God will give Pharaoh a propitious answer”. **17** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “In my dream, I was standing on the bank of the river. **18** And then, seven cows, well-favored and fat-fleshed, came up out of the river, and they fed in the meadow. **19** And then, seven other cows came up after them; they were scrawny, very ugly and emaciated; such as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt.[1] **20** Then the ugly and emaciated cows ate up the first seven fat cows! **21** And after they had eaten them up, no one could tell that they had eaten them, for their appearance was just as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke. **22** Then I dreamed again, and behold, seven heads, plump and healthy, came up on one stalk. **23** And then, seven heads, withered, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprang up after them. **24** And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So I told the magicians, but there was no one who could interpret for me.”

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh had only one dream; God has told Pharaoh what he is about to do. **26** The seven good cows are seven years; the seven good heads are seven years; it is one dream. **27** And the seven thin, ugly cows that came up after them are seven years; and the seven thin heads scorched by the east wind are seven years of famine. **28** It is just as I said to Pharaoh; God has told Pharaoh what he is about to do. **29** Indeed, seven years of great plenty will come throughout the land of Egypt; **30** but after them will come seven years of famine, and all that plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will consume the land. **31** And the plenty in the land will not be remembered, because of the famine that follows, for it will be very severe. **32** And the dream was repeated twice to Pharaoh, because God has determined this thing, and God will do it soon.

[1] This observation was Pharaoh's reaction.

33 “Now therefore, let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man, and let him set him over the land of Egypt. **34** Let Pharaoh do so, and let him appoint administrators over the land, to collect a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of plenty. **35** And let them gather all the food of those good years that are to come, and let them store up grain under Pharaoh's hand,[1] let them store it for food in the cities. **36** Then that food will be as a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that will be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish through the famine.”[2]

37 Well now, the advice pleased Pharaoh and all his servants. **38** And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find anyone like this man, in whom the spirit of God is?” **39** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. **40** You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in respect to the throne will I be greater than you.” **41** And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I am indeed setting you over all the land of Egypt”.

42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him with fine linen garments and put a gold chain around his neck. **43** And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. **44** Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh; and without your word no one will lift hand or foot

[1] Pharaoh’s authority was to be respected and protected.

[2] The advice Joseph gave was not part of the dreams, but God obviously spoke through him. That was why God gave the dreams. In the long run, God intended to preserve the lives of Jacob and his descendants; and it was in Goshen that they proliferated.

in all the land of Egypt."[1] **45** And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-Paneah, and gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. **46** Joseph was thirty years old[2] when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

Joseph rules Egypt

41:47 During the seven years of plenty, the land produced abundantly. **48** He gathered up all the food of the seven years that were in the land of Egypt, and he stored it in the cities, putting in each city the food from its surrounding fields. **49** So Joseph gathered grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting it, because it was beyond counting. **50** Before a year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him. **51** Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh:[3] "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house". **52** He called the name of the

[1] I understand that that was an exaggerated way of saying that all the people in Egypt would be under Joseph's authority, a condition guaranteed by Pharaoh himself. But what a difference, what a transformation: from prisoner in a dungeon to ruler of the country!

[2] I will attempt an arbitrary calculation. I imagine that Joseph spent some four years in the prison, and that he spent some three years with Potiphar, before being sent there (his promotion did not happen overnight). In that event, he would have been twenty-three when he arrived in Egypt. Since he was born at the end of the fourteen years that Jacob worked for his wives, he would have been about seven when Jacob settled at Succoth. If Jacob stayed thirteen years in Succoth (as I have argued elsewhere), Joseph was twenty when they entered Canaan. If Benjamin was born a year later, he would have been around nineteen when he was taken to Egypt; since the last time Joseph saw him he was a toddler, he would not have recognized him.

[3] The name means 'forgetting'.

second Ephraim:[1] “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction”.

53 Then the seven years of plenty that were in the land of Egypt ended, **54** and the seven years of famine began to come, as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. **55** And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread. And Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, “Go to Joseph; whatever he tells you, do.” **56** So when the famine was severe throughout the land, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout the land of Egypt. **57** And all the countries came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe in all the lands.[2]

Joseph and his brothers

42:1 When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, “Why are you just looking at one another?” **2** He said, “Indeed, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy for us from there, so that we may live and not die.” **3** So Joseph’s ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. **4** But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, with his brothers, for he said, “Lest he come to harm”. **5** So the sons of Israel went to buy grain among the others who went, because there was famine in the land of Canaan. **6** Now Joseph was governor over the land; he was the one selling to all the people of the land.

Then Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. **7** When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he acted as a stranger toward them and spoke harshly to them. He said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of

[1] The name means ‘fruitful’.

[2] We may assume that they were neighboring lands.

Canaan, to buy food". **8** Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. **9** Then Joseph remembered the dreams he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where the land is unprotected!"[1] **10** And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. **11** We are all sons of the same man; we are honest; your servants are not spies." **12** But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the unprotected land". **13** And they said, “Your servants are twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; indeed, the youngest is with our father this day; and the other is no more.” **14** Then Joseph said unto them, “It is just as I said to you, ‘You are spies!’ **15** This is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you shall not leave here, unless your youngest brother comes here. **16** Send one of you to fetch your brother; and you shall be kept in prison, that your words may be tested, whether there is any truth in you; or else, as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies.” **17** And he put them all in prison for three days.

18 On the third day Joseph said to them, “I fear God; do this, and you will live. **19** If you are honest men, let one of you brothers be bound in your prison house;[2] and you go, carry grain for the famine in your households. **20** And bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified and you will not die.” And they did so. **21** Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he begged us,[3] but we did not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.”[4] **22** And

[1] José starts to ‘get even’ with his brothers.

[2] That is, the house where they had been in prison; evidently they had not been put in a nasty prison.

[3] Joseph begged not to be sold.

[4] It seems that they were marked by what they did to Joseph; their consciences were troubled.

Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’? But you did not listen! So his blood is being required.” **23** They did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. **24** So he went away from them and wept. Then he returned to them and spoke to them. And he took Simeon from among them and bound him before their eyes.

25 Then Joseph commanded that their sacks be filled with grain, and that each man's money be returned to his sack, and that they be given food for the journey. And it was done for them. **26** So they loaded their grain on their donkeys and departed from there. **27** And one of them, when he opened his sack to give food to his donkey at the lodging place, he saw his money—there it was in the mouth of his sack! **28** So he said to his brothers, "My money has been returned; here it is in my sack!" Then their hearts failed them, and they were terrified, saying to one another, "What is this that God has done to us?"[1]

Jacob and his sons

29 They came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan and told him everything that had happened to them. They said, **30** “The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly to us and treated us like spies of the land. **31** And we said to him, ‘We are honest men, we are not spies. **32** We are twelve brothers, our father’s sons; one is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan.’ **33** Then the man, the lord of the land, said to us, ‘By this I will know that you are honest: leave one of your brothers with me and take food for the famine of your house-holds, and go. **34** Bring your youngest brother to me; then I will know that you are not spies, but that you are honest. Then I will give your brother

[1] They attributed the situation to God; well, it was certainly strange, inexplicable by normal logic.

to you, and you may trade in the land.'" **35** Then it happened, as they emptied their sacks—each man's bundle of money was in his sack! When they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid.[1]

36 Then their father Jacob said to them, "You have bereaved me; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not; and you would take Benjamin! All this is against me." **37** Then Reuben said to his father, "You may kill my two sons if I do not bring him back to you; give him into my hand, and I will bring him back to you". **38** But he said, "My son shall not go down with you,[2] for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should happen to him on the way that you go, you would bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow."

43:1 Now the famine was severe in the land. **2** And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go back, buy us a little food". **3** But Judah answered him, saying, "The man emphatically warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you'. **4** If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. **5** But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you'." **6** And Israel said, "Why did you treat me so badly as to tell the man that you had another brother?" **7** And they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves, and about our kindred, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' And we answered him according to those words. How could we have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8 Then Judah said to his father Israel, "Send the youth with me, and we will arise and go, so that we may live and

[1] Indeed, the thing was very strange.

[2] Jacob was condemning Simeon to rot in prison, but he probably didn't think of that.

not die, both we, you and our children. **9** I myself will be surety for him; you can require him from my hand. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, I will bear the blame before you forever. **10** For if we had not delayed, surely by now we would have returned a second time."[1] **11** Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, do this: Take some of the best produce of the land in your vessels and carry a gift to the man: a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.[2] **12** And take double the money in your hand; and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. **13** Take your brother also and arise; go back to the man. **14** And may God Almighty give you mercy before the man, and may he release your other brother and Benjamin to you. And I, if I am bereaved, bereaved I will be!"[3]

Joseph and his brothers, second time

43:15 Then the men took the gift, double the money in their hand, and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. **16** When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to the house, and kill and prepare an animal; for these men will eat with me at noon". **17** So the man did as Joseph had said; he brought the men into Joseph's house. **18** Well the men were afraid, because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the other time that we are being brought here, to incriminate us and to subdue us, to enslave us and to take our donkeys."[4] **19** So they

[1] Judah begins to take the lead, which will become evident later on.

[2] It seems there were still some edible things, but not the basic food.

[3] Poor Jacob!

[4] Well, the men had reason to be afraid, but it seems that there was pessimism as well.

approached the steward of Joseph's house and spoke to him at the door of the house. **20** And they said, "Oh my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food; **21** but it happened, when we came to the lodging place, and opened our sacks, there, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. **22** And we have brought other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks." **23** And he said, "Peace be to you, do not fear. Your God, also the God of your father,[1] has given you treasure in your sacks; your money came to me."[2] Then he brought Simeon out to them.[3]

24 The steward brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; he also gave their donkeys fodder. **25** Then they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon, for they had heard that they were to eat bread there. **26** When Joseph entered the house, they brought the present that was in their hand to him, in the house, and bowed down to him to the ground. **27** He asked them how they were doing, and said, "Is your father, the old man of whom you spoke, well? Is he still alive?" **28** And they said, "Your servant our father is well; he is still alive". And they bowed their heads and bowed down. **29** Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?" Then he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son". **30** And Joseph hurried and looked for a place to weep, for he was deeply moved with emotion toward his brother; and he

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[1] It seems curious to me that the man should say it was God; in fact, their God!

[2] The man did not lie; he had indeed received the money; only Joseph had ordered that it be returned.

[3] Joseph kept his word; they brought Benjamin, and he released Simeon.

went into his private room and wept there. **31** Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the bread!"

32 So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is an abomination to the Egyptians.[1] **33** And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked at each other in astonishment.[2] **34** And portions were taken to them from before him; but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

44:1 Joseph commanded the steward of his house, saying, "Fill these men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. **2** Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest,[3] along with his grain money." And he did as Joseph had said. **3** When the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. **4** When they were not yet far from the city, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men until you overtake them. And say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for good? **5** Where is the cup from which my lord drinks, and by which he really does divination?[4] What

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[1] Racism has been around for a long time!

[2] The men's reaction allows us to deduce that they had been seated at the table in order of age, from oldest to youngest. Only someone within the family could have known that. See also 44:12.

[3] That was dirty! However, they had caused him years of physical suffering, as well as emotional suffering. He did not cause them any physical suffering (except for a little for Simeon), and their emotional suffering was short-lived.

[4] Joseph certainly used the cup to drink from, but it seems unlikely to me that he practiced divination. Why? God spoke to him. I imagine

you have done is wicked'." **6** And he overtook them and spoke those words to them. **7** And they said to him, "Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing. **8** Look, we even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the money that we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? **9** Let the one of your servants with whom it is found die,[1] and we also will be my lord's slaves." **10** And he said, "Very well then, let it be according to your words; the one with whom it is found will be my slave, but you will be innocent."[2] **11** So they hurried, and each man put his sack down on the ground, and each one opened his sack. **12** Then the steward searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest;[3] and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.[4] **13** Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

14 So Judah[5] and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there; and they fell to the ground before him.[6] **15** Then Joseph said to them, "What is this that you have done? Did you not know that someone like I am can certainly divine?" **16** Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord?

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that he instructed the steward to speak this way just to heighten the seriousness of the accusation.

[1] That was extreme! They were desperate.

[2] He accepted their proposal, but softened it considerably.

[3] How did he know the order? He remembered the instructions he had received to place them at the table.

[4] Well now, Benjamin knew he hadn't done anything; and each man's money was back in his sack, which also wasn't their doing. So it was obvious that a higher power was working against them. And since they had offered themselves as slaves, if the cup were found, there was no way out. They returned to the city. Furthermore, to return without Benjamin would likely result in their father's death.

[5] Notice that Judah is now the leader.

[6] They did this several times, just as Joseph had dreamed.

What shall we speak? And how can we clear ourselves? God has exposed the iniquity of your servants; so then, we are my lord's slaves, both we and he in whose hand the cup was found." **17** But he said, "Far be it from me to do such a thing! The man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. As for you, go up in peace to your father."

18 Then Judah came near to him and said, “O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in the ears of my lord, and do not let your anger burn against your servant, for you are like Pharaoh. **19** My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Do you have a father or a brother?’ **20** And we said to my lord, ‘We have an aged father, and a young son of his old age, whose brother is dead; and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him’. **21** Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him to me, that I may set my eyes on him’. **22** And we said to my lord, ‘The youth cannot leave his father; for if he should leave his father, his father would die’. **23** Then you said to your servants, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will see my face no more’. **24** So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. **25** When our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food’, **26** we said, ‘We cannot go down; but if our youngest brother goes with us, we will go down; for we may not see the man’s face unless our youngest brother is with us.’ **27** Then your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons. **28** One of them went away from me, and I said, “Surely he has been torn to pieces”, and I have not seen him since. **29** If you also take this one away from me, and harm happens to him, you will bring down my gray hair to Sheol with sorrow.’ **30** Now therefore, if I go to your servant my father, and the youth is not with us—since his life is bound up with his son’s life—**31** it will happen, when he sees that the youth is not with us, that he will die. Thus your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with

sorrow to Sheol. **32** For your servant became surety for the youth to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, forever'. **33** So then, please let your servant take the young man's place as my lord's slave, and let the youth go up with his brothers— **34** for how can I go up to my father unless the youth is with me?—lest I see the evil that will come upon my father."[1]

Joseph reveals himself to his brothers

45:1 Then Joseph could no longer contain himself before all who were with him, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave me!"[2] So no one stayed with him when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. **2** He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and Pharaoh's household was informed about it. **3** Then Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Can my father still be alive?"[3] But his brothers could not answer him, for they were terrified of him. **4** Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Now come near to me". And they came near. Then he said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** Now then, do not be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.[4] **6** There has been a famine in the land for just

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[1] Judah's intercession was eloquent and moving; so much so that Joseph could not contain himself. It was Judah's sensible suggestion that saved Joseph from being killed, when he was sold instead, but we do not know if Joseph could hear it. (If he heard it, he knew that he owed his life to Judah; so that he owed Judah some consideration.)

[2] He gave the order in Egyptian, which the brothers did not understand. Then he spoke in Hebrew, when he revealed himself to them.

[3] The brothers were so convinced of Joseph's death that they hadn't even become suspicious, despite the strange things that had happened. So it seems that Joseph wanted to combat their disbelief: if Jacob could still be alive, so could Joseph.

[4] Joseph clearly states that it was God who directed the whole story.

two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **7** Yes, God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the land, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. **8** So it was not really you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. **10** You will live in the land of Goshen,[1] and you will be near me—you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds and all that you have. **11** I will provide for you there, because there will be five more years of famine, so that you will not become destitute, you and your household and all that you have".' **12** Now really, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is I who am speaking to you. **13** So you tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; so hurry and bring my father down here." **14** Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. **15** Then he kissed all his brothers and wept over them; and after that his brothers talked with him.[2]

16 Now this news was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come". And it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. **17** So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. **18** Take your father and your households and come to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. **19** Each of you individually is commanded: Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives; take your father and

[1] Joseph already had everything planned.

[2] The brothers found it hard to believe that it could be Joseph, but they ended up being convinced.

come. **20** Do not worry about your possessions, for the best of all the land of Egypt will be yours'."[1]

21 Then the sons of Israel did so. And Joseph gave them wagons, according to Pharaoh's command; he also gave them food for the journey. **22** And he gave to each of them all a change of clothing; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothing. **23** He also sent to his father ten donkeys loaded with the best of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, and bread and food for his father for the journey. **24** Then he sent his brothers away, and they departed. And he said to them, "Do not quarrel on the way!"[2] **25** So they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan, to Jacob their father. **26** And they told him, saying, "Joseph is still alive; indeed, he is ruler over all the land of Egypt." And Jacob's heart almost stopped; he did not believe them. **27** But they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had spoken to them; and he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him; and the spirit of Jacob their father revived. **28** Then Israel said, "It is enough;[3] my son Joseph is still alive; I will go and see him before I die."

The people of Israel move to Egypt

46:1 Then Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. **2** And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!"[4] And he said, "Here I am". **3** And He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make of you a great nation. **4** I will go down with you to Egypt, and will surely bring you

[1] Pharaoh's generosity and goodwill are impressive.

[2] This order is curious. It seems that Joseph didn't want anything to delay his father's coming.

[3] The evidence was enough to convince him.

[4] Why did God call him Jacob, instead of Israel?

back;[1] and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes."[2] **5** Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones and their wives in the wagons that Pharaoh had sent to carry him. **6** They took their livestock and their possessions that they had acquired in the land of Canaan and went to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him. **7** His sons and his sons' sons were with him. His daughters, and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he took with him to Egypt.[3]

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[1] God brought the descendants back, and Jacob's body was taken back.

[2] This expression may mean that Joseph would close Jacob's eyes at the moment of his death. See 50:1.

[3] 46:7 lists the descendants that Jacob took with him to Egypt: his sons and his sons' sons, and his daughters and his sons' daughters; that is, those who could be called his descendants. (There were doubtless many slaves as well, not to mention the children of Shechem that were not killed.) If Joseph was 37 at the time (30 + 7), Reuben was 43, and four of his sons are named (but no daughters). Simeon was 42 (at the most), and six of his sons are named (but no daughters). Levi was 41 (at the most), and three of his sons are named (but no daughters).

Judah was 40 (at the most), and five of his sons are named, two of which God had executed (but no daughters). **However**, two of his grandsons are also named. Now then, Er and Onan were adults when God executed them, and Shelah was an adult when Perez was born. Judah's first three had to be at least a year apart in age. In short, Perez was no more than a toddler when he was taken to Egypt, so his two sons were still in his 'loins', to be born in Egypt many years later.

Issachar was 37 (at the most), and four of his sons are named (but no daughters). Zebulon was 36 (at the most), and three of his sons ae named (but no daughters). The only daughter who is named is Dinah, among the descendants of Leah. Gad was 39 (at the most), and seven of his sons are named (but no daughters). Asher was 38 (at the most), and four of his sons are named, plus one daughter. Since Joseph was already there, we come to Benjamin, who was 19 (at the most), and ten of his sons are named (but no daughters). As with Perez, most, if not all, of those ten were still in his 'loins', to be born later in Egypt. If Moses wrote under Inspiration, then the inclusion of

8 These are the names of the children of Israel who went into Egypt: Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn. **9** The sons of Reuben: Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron and Carmi. **10** The sons of Simeon: Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.[1] **11** The sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. **12** The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. **13** The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Job and Shimron. **14** The sons of Zebulun: Sered, Elon and Jahleel. **15** Those were the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-Aram, and his daughter Dinah; all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty-three.[2]

16 The sons of Gad: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli. 17 The sons of Asher: Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and their sister Serah. And the sons of Beriah were Heber and Malchiel. 18 Those were the sons of Zilpah, whom

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those yet to be born sons was deliberate. Why? I suppose that it is to emphasize that it is the human male that begets, that procreates, that transmits life, soul/spirit and the image of God. Dan was 40 (at the most), and only one son is named (and no daughters). Naphtali was 39 (at the most), and four of his sons are named (but no daughters).

Now then, verse seven includes Jacob's daughters and his sons' daughters, but only one of each is mentioned in the following list, although many more had certainly been born. On the other hand, the sons of Perez and Benjamin had yet to be born! Just as Matthew gave an edited or selective genealogy of the Christ (as I demonstrate in my article, 'Some related anomalies in Matthew's genealogy of the Christ'), so Moses gave an edited or selective list of the persons who accompanied Jacob to Egypt.

[1] If all of them got their wives from Shechem, all their wives were Canaanite, so how was this one different?

[2] The number only includes one daughter.

Laban gave to his daughter Leah; she bore those sixteen souls to Jacob.[1]

19 The sons of Rachel, Jacob's wife: Joseph and Benjamin. **20** And to Joseph, in the land of Egypt, were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera priest of On, bore to him. **21** The sons of Benjamin: Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard. **22** Those were the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen souls in all.

23 The son of Dan: Hushim. **24** The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem. **25** Those were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter; she bore them to Jacob: seven souls in all. **26** All the souls who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his loins,[2] aside from the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six souls in all. **27** The sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.[3]

28 Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph, to give him directions to Goshen; and they came to the land of Goshen. **29** Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father, Israel. When he came to him, he fell on his neck and wept there for a long time.[4] **30** And Israel said to Joseph, “Now I can die, for I have seen your face, and you are still alive”.[5] **31** Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and report to Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household who

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[1] The number includes the sister.

[2] ‘Loins’, plural, is used to refer to the male reproductive system. ‘Loin’, singular, means 'waist'.

[3] In addition to Joseph and his two sons, Jacob himself is included, making 70. Without them, the number is 66.

[4] Evidently that was how they expressed their emotions.

[5] But he still lived 17 years!

were in the land of Canaan have come to me. **32** And the men are shepherds, they tend livestock, and they have brought with them their flocks, their herds and all that they have.' **33** Now then, when Pharaoh calls you in, and says, 'What is your occupation?' **34** You must say, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our youth until now, both we and our fathers'; so that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."[1]

47:1 Then Joseph went and informed Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds, with all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they are in the land of Goshen". **2** And he had taken five men from among his brothers, and he presented them to Pharaoh. **3** Then Pharaoh said to the brothers, "What is your occupation?" And they said to Pharaoh, "Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers". **4** They also said to Pharaoh, "We have come to dwell in the land; because there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, because the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Therefore, please let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen." **5** Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. **6** The land of Egypt is before you; have your father and your brothers live in the best of the land; let them live in the land of Goshen. And if you know of any competent men among them, put them in charge of my livestock."[2]

7 Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and placed him before Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.[3] **8** Pharaoh said

[1] This information seems curious to me; they had sheep, and someone had to take care of them.

[2] Since the Egyptians despised that occupation, this was one small benefit for Pharaoh.

[3] Hebrews 7:7 says: "Without dispute, the lesser is blessed by the greater". Well, Pharoah owed a great deal to Joseph, and Jacob was his father.

to Jacob, “How many are the days of the years[1] of your life?”
9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my
pilgrimage are one hundred and thirty years; the days of the
years of my life have been few and troubled, and have not
attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in
the days of their pilgrimage.”[2] **10** So Jacob blessed Pharaoh,
and went out from before Pharaoh. **11** Then Joseph gave a
possession to his father and his brothers in the land of Egypt,
and settled them in the best of the land, in the land of Rame-
ses, as Pharaoh had commanded. **12** Then Joseph supplied his
father, his brothers, and all his father’s household with food,
according to the number of their children.

The Egyptians sell themselves to Pharaoh

47:13 Now there was no bread in all the land, for the famine
was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of
Canaan languished because of the famine. **14** So Joseph ga-
thered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt
and in the land of Canaan, for the grain that they bought; and
Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house. **15** Now
when the money from the land of Egypt and the land of
Canaan was gone, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said,
"Give us bread; why should we die in your presence? The
money is gone!" **16** Then Joseph said, "If the money is gone,
bring your livestock, and I will give you bread for your live-
stock". **17** So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and
Joseph gave them bread in exchange for the horses, the
flocks, the cattle and the donkeys. He fed them that year with
bread in exchange for all their livestock. **18** When that year
was over, they came to him in the second year and said to

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[1] That is what Pharaoh said; and of course each year is made up of days. If most of the days were bad, then you had a bad year.

[2] By definition, a pilgrim is on a journey, away from his home. For those of us whose home is Heaven, life in this world is indeed a ‘pilgrimage’. See Hebrews 11:8-10.

him, “We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left before my lord except our bodies and our lands. **19** Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will become Pharaoh’s possession; give us seed that we may live and not die, and the land not become desolate.” **20** So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh’s. **21** And he moved the people into the cities,[1] from one end of the borders of Egypt to the other end. **22** Only the land of the priests he did not buy, because the priests had a portion from Pharaoh, and they ate their portion, which Pharaoh had given them; therefore they did not sell their land.

23 Then Joseph said to the people, “Listen, I have already bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now here is seed for you to sow the land.[2] **24** But you shall give a fifth of each harvest to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be yours for seed for the field, for your food, for yourselves and for those in your households, and for your little ones to eat.” **25** So they said, “You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the eyes of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s slaves”. **26** So Joseph established it as a law in the land of Egypt to this day, that a fifth should belong to Pharaoh; except for the land of the priests only; it did not become Pharaoh’s.

The last days of Jacob

47:27 Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in the area of Goshen, and acquired possessions there; and they were fruit-

[1] This made it easier to control food distribution according to the size of each family. Rationing was probably necessary to have enough seed left over for planting in the eighth year. (Modern versions may have a different wording, following the Septuagint and Vulgate.)

[2] Logically, this occurred after the seven years of famine.

ful and multiplied exceedingly.[1] **28** And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the days of Jacob, the years of his life, were one hundred and forty-seven years. **29** When the time approached for Israel to die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, **30** but let me lie with my fathers; you must carry me up out of Egypt and bury me in their burying-place.” And he said, “I will do as you have said”. **31** Then he said, “Swear to me!” And he swore to him. And Israel bowed down on the head of the bed.

Jacob blesses Joseph's sons

48:1 After those things, someone told Joseph, "Your father is sick!" So he took his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him. **2** And someone told Jacob, "Your son Joseph has come to you". So Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. **3** Then Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz[2] in the land of Canaan and blessed me. **4** He said to me, ‘Indeed, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make you a multitude of peoples, and I will give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession’. **5** Now your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine. Just like Reuben and Simeon, they will be mine. **6** But your offspring, whom you beget after them, will be yours;[3] their inheritance will be part of the inheritance of their brothers. **7** When I came from Paddan, Rachel died on me in the land of Canaan, on the way, a short distance

[1] Here ‘Israel’ refers to the descendants, not the man.

[2] Jacob spoke accurately; when God appeared to him, the name of the place was Luz. It was after this that Jacob changed the name to Bethel.

[3] However, we have no record of Joseph having fathered any more children than those two.

from Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath” (that is, Bethlehem).[1]

8 Then Israel saw Joseph's sons and said, "Who are these?" **9** And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me here". And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them". **10** (Now Israel's eyes could not see clearly, because of his old age.) So Joseph brought them near to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. **11** And Israel said to Joseph, "I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your descendants". **12** Then Joseph brought them from between his father's knees and bowed his face to the ground. **13** Then Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near to him. **14** Then Israel stretched out his right hand and placed it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, crossing his arms; even though Manasseh was the firstborn. **15** Then he blessed Joseph and said, “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, **16** the Angel who redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads, and may my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”

17 But when Joseph saw that his father was laying his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. **18** And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this is the firstborn; lay your right hand on his

[1] But why did Jacob mention Rachel's death at that moment? Perhaps in his mind, if she hadn't died, she would have given him more children, and he was considering Joseph's sons as such. I have never understood why Jacob didn't bury Rachel at Machpelah, perhaps 20 miles away.

head". **19** But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know; he too will become a people, and he too will be great; yet his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a multitude of peoples." **20** And he blessed them that day, saying, "Israel will bless by you (sg),[1] saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh!'" So he put Ephraim before Manasseh. **21** Then Israel said to Joseph, “Behold, I am about to die; but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. **22** Also, to you I am giving one portion of the land more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.”[2]

Jacob blesses his sons

49:1 Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, and I will tell[3] you what will happen to you in the days to come. **2** Gather together and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to Israel your father. **3** 'Reuben, you are my firstborn, my might, the beginning of my strength, excelling in dignity and excelling in power. **4** Unstable as water, you will no longer excel, because you went up to your father's bed and defiled it'[4]—he went up to my couch.[5]

5 “Simeon and Levi are brothers; their weapons are instruments of violence.[6] **6** May my soul not enter their council, and may my honor not associate with their

[1] The Hebrew text does indeed have ‘you’, singular.

[2] There is no Record of when or how this occurred.

[3] Jacob did not say that it would be God speaking. Much of what he said was more descriptive than prophetic. Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, and Benjamin receive only a brief mention. Dan, Issachar, Levi, Simeon, and Reuben receive a medium-size mention. Only Judah and Joseph receive greater attention.

[4] He started well, but ended badly. See the terrible verses in Ezekiel 18:24-26.

[5] Here he gave an explanatory aside to the others.

[6] They weren't just for defense.

assembly;[1] for in their anger they killed men, and in their self-will they hamstrung oxen.[2] **7** Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel! I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.[3]

8 "'Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you.'[4] **9** Judah is a young lion. 'You return from the prey, my son'. He crouches and lies down like a lion, and like a lioness; who will rouse him? **10** The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and the peoples will obey him.[5] **11** He ties his young donkey to a vine, his donkey's colt to the choicest branch; he washes his garments in wine, his clothes in the blood of grapes. **12** His eyes will be sparkling from wine, and his teeth

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[1] As is typical of Hebrew discourse, Jacob repeatedly says the same thing twice.

[2] In chapter 34, which recounts the sack of Shechem, they did kill the men, but there is no mention of them mistreating the animals. What good is an ox? It is for work, or to be eaten. Hamstrung, it can't work. To eat it, you just have to kill it; why torture it? Jacob said they were both cruel, and to hamstring an ox would really be cruel, besides being stupid and nonsensical. What they did to the men was indeed cruel.

[3] The use of the first person is as if it were God speaking; in fact, the Levites were scattered among the other tribes. (Simeon was basically assimilated into Judah.)

[4] Judah is described as rising to preeminence over his brothers, and in the prior chapters he repeatedly took the lead. The temple was built in Jerusalem, which was Judah's capital. The southern kingdom lasted much longer than the northern kingdom, and it was essentially Judah that returned from Babylon and represented Israel in Jesus' time.

[5] Verse 10 seems to refer to the Messiah. The word "Shiloh" occurs only here in the OT, so it is difficult to know what meaning it is meant to represent. However, "him" seems to indicate a man, making the word a proper name. We imagine that it is a name for the Messiah.

white from milk.[1]

13 "Zebulun will dwell on the seashore and will be a haven for ships, and his border will adjoin Sidon.[2] **14** Issachar is a strong-boned donkey, crouched between two saddle-bags. **15** When he saw a good resting place and that the land was pleasant, he bowed his shoulder to carry, and submitted to forced labor.[3]

16 "Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. **17** Dan will be a serpent by the way, a viper by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that its rider falls backward—**18** 'O Jehovah, I wait for your salvation!'[4] **19** Gad will be attacked by a band of raiders, but he will attack them back. **20** Asher will have plenty of bread, and he will give royal dainties. **21** Naphtali is a gazelle let loose; he proffers beautiful sayings.[5]

22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine by a spring, whose branches run over the wall. **23** The archers harass him, shoot at him and hate him. **24** But his bow remains strong, and the arms of his hands are made agile by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, by the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel;[6] **25** by the God of your father. 'May He help you, and may the Almighty bless you with blessings from heaven above,[7] with

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[1] The description seems to be one of unusual prosperity.

[2] As far as we know, the area that fell to Zebulun had no shore on any sea, and was far from Sidon. This word was not prophetic (Jacob 'missed his shot').

[3] The description is of a submissive but hard-working type.

[4] Here we have a short prayer addressed to Jehovah. Jacob appears to be asking God to deliver him from Dan! In Revelation 7:5-8, Dan is omitted from the list of the twelve tribes. Anyone who acts like this viper is really perverse.

[5] It is nice to see a loose gazelle, as well as to hear beautiful sayings!

[6] Here Jacob gives three different titles to Jehovah, emphasizing God's role in protecting Joseph.

[7] We are used to thinking of blessings that come from above, but not from the abyss! I confess that I don't understand this reference.

blessings from the deep below, with blessings of the breasts and of the womb.[1] **26** The blessings of your father exceeded the blessings of my ancestors, to the limit of the everlasting hills.'[2] Let them[3] rest on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separated from his brothers. **27** Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; in the morning he will devour the prey, and in the evening he will divide the spoil."

28 Those were the twelve tribes of Israel, each one, and that is what their father said to them when he blessed them; he blessed each of them according to his blessing. **29** Then he commanded them and said to them, "I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, **30** in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. **31** There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. **32** The field and the cave that is in it were purchased from the sons of Heth."[4] **33** When Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.[5]

Jacob is buried

50:1 Then Joseph fell on his father's face and wept over him, and kissed him. **2** Then Joseph commanded his servants the

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[1] Jacob is asking that Joseph be given many descendants.

[2] In terms of children, he certainly surpassed Isaac and Abraham, but "to the limit of the everlasting hills" seems to be a bit of hyperbole.

[3] That is, the blessings.

[4] He emphasizes that the cave was duly purchased.

[5] This expression, "he was gathered to his people", is repeated many times in the historical books. It cannot refer to the physical body, which would not be the case, but to the spirit. We have biblical teaching that the human spirit does not die.

physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. **3** It took forty days, for that is how long it takes for those who are embalmed. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.[1] **4** After the days of mourning for him were over, Joseph spoke to Pharaoh's household, saying, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, please speak in Pharaoh's ears, saying, **5** 'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am about to die; in my grave, which I dug for myself[2] in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me". Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return'."[3] **6** And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear". **7** So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went up with him,[4] **8** along with all Joseph's house, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. **9** Chariots and horsemen also went up with him—a very great company.

10 When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan,[5] they mourned there with a great and

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[1] Wow, that was a long time! And it was the Egyptians, not his family. Jacob had evidently earned their respect and affection to an unusual extent.

[2] We have no Record of this, but it might be that he actually dug a hole for himself in the cave.

[3] Joseph always respected Pharaoh's authority, and evidently was never considered to be a threat to that authority.

[4] This is curious. Why all the elders of Egypt? Could it be that during the 17 years he lived in Egypt, Jacob became a role model for the other elders?

[5] This is also curious. The interpretation of "beyond", or "on the other side", depends on the perspective; for those on the east side of the Jordan, the other side is the west side, and vice versa. But since the procession departed from Egypt, the perspective would be from there, and thus the threshing floor was on the east side of the Jordan. But the Jordan ends at the Dead Sea, and Machpelah is on

intense lamentation. He mourned for his father for seven days. **11** The Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, observed the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad and said, “This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians!” Therefore its name was called Abel Mizraim,[1] which is beyond the Jordan. **12** So his sons did to him as he had commanded them; **13** for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham had bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite, as a burying-place. **14** After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

The brothers' fear

15 Now Joseph's brothers, realizing that their father was dead, said, "What if Joseph harbors a grudge against us and actually repays us for all the evil that we did to him?" **16** So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, **17** 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I ask you now, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin, for they wronged you”.'[2] So then, please forgive the trespass of the servants of your father's God."[3] And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. **18** Afterward his

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the west side of the Dead Sea (about halfway up it), and therefore of the Jordan as well. So the procession took a very large detour, going up the east side of the Sea until it reached the Jordan. The reason for the detour is not explained. [Even if the threshing floor in question were on the west side of the Jordan, to reach the river's endpoint, the procession would have had to pass through Machpelah, walking at least another unnecessary 40 km, only to walk back those 40 km! I think that we can agree that no one would do such a thing.] So I conclude that the threshing floor was indeed on the east side of the Jordan, and the reason for the detour remains unexplained.

[1] The name means: lamentation of the Egyptians.

[2] That was a lie; it seems that the men were really afraid.

[3] Really now, when had they started acting like servants of Jehovah?

brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "We are your slaves!" **19** But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid; am I in God’s place? **20** You really meant evil against me, but God meant it for good,[1] to bring about this present situation, to save many people alive. **21** So now do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your children.” So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

The death of Joseph

22 So Joseph lived on in Egypt, he and his father's household. Joseph lived one hundred and ten years, **23** and he saw the children of Ephraim to the third generation, as well as the children of Machir the son of Manasseh, whom he took on his knees. **24** And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die; but God will surely visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob". **25** And Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here".[2] **26** And Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten; and they embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.[3]

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[1] I have seen this repeatedly in my own life: people really intend to harm you, but God uses it for good. That is, God uses other people’s evil intentions to get you where He wants you, within the plan He has for your life.

[2] Indeed, Joshua 24:32 records that Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem, which in turn was within the area occupied by Joseph's son Manasseh.

[3] The book of Genesis begins with creation and ends with a coffin. That is also the story of our earthly life: it begins with creation and ends with a coffin. Alack.

APPENDIX

1) Baptisms in the Bible

Our vocabulary item 'baptism', and its verb 'baptize', are transliterations of the corresponding terms in the Greek New Testament. I am not aware of equivalents in Hebrew, so I will base this study on the NT, including for the baptisms in the OT. Why did the translators into English choose to transliterate rather than translate? Probably because, as with Hebrew, we have no corresponding terms that would serve for a translation. Of course, by now the transliterated terms are part of our vocabulary. I will organize this study of the baptisms under three headings: 1) during the old covenant, 2) during the transition, 3) during the new covenant.

Baptisms during the old covenant

1) In 1 Corinthians 10:2 our versions generally say that the people who departed from Egypt "were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea". I would prefer 'by the cloud and by the sea', but what is the point of the statement? The people were identified with Moses, and that identification translated into dependence and obedience. Without Moses they would not have crossed the sea, and they had to obey 'blindly', as it were, no matter how improbable the situation. They were guided and protected by the cloud, but under the authority of Moses. An identification that expresses itself in dependence and obedience might well serve for a definition of Christian baptism, at least in part.

2) Mark wrote for a Roman audience, and in 7:3-4 he explains certain Jewish customs:

> Because the Pharisees, indeed all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they baptize themselves. And there are many other things they have

received and hold—baptisms of cups, pitchers, copper vessels and couches.

'The tradition of the elders' was based on the written instructions given by Moses that had to do with purification. That purification was done with water. The idea of purification is not foreign to Christian baptism.

3) Based on extra-biblical information (not in the Bible), we know that a Gentile who converted to Judaism was baptized—it was one of the requirements that he had to fulfill. That baptism was done with water, but there is doubt as to just how it was done. However, it appears that it represented a formal declaration to the effect that the person was changing religion, or way of life. It was a procedure that carried with it significant consequences in both the social and spiritual spheres. We may understand that such a baptism served as a background for John's baptism—the people were used to the idea.

Baptisms during the transition

1) All four of the Gospels speak of the ministry of John the Baptizer. John began his ministry proclaiming and offering a baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins[1] (Mark 1:4). Matthew and Mark record that the candidates would confess their sins; of course, it was their sins that they were repenting of. All four of the Gospels record that John was preparing the way of the LORD. John himself affirmed that he

[1] There are those who squirm at the plain meaning of the Text—John was offering forgiveness of sins. Well, throughout the Old Testament, if you brought an animal offering, you were confessing to being a sinner, and expecting to be forgiven. As forerunner to the Lamb of God, who would provide the ultimate payment for sin, John represented a transition, from the old to the new. Should someone ask, "How could one person pay for the sins of the whole world?", I offer the following possibility: to pay an infinite debt, would require an infinite person, and Jesus was, and is, an infinite person.

baptized with water, but the Text does not clarify how he did it.

2) John baptized Jesus. This was a unique case that did not fit the declared nature of the baptism offered by John. Jesus had no sin; He had nothing to repent of; He did not need pardon. Indeed, John did not like the idea: "I have need to be baptized by You, and You are coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14). In answer Jesus said to him, "Permit it now, because thus it is appropriate for us to fulfill all righteousness." This response has given rise to a variety of interpretations, but upon reflection, we do not need to interpret it, since it was not a norm or an example to be followed; it was *sui generis*.

3) John 3:22, 26; 4:1 and 2 mention that the disciples of Jesus were baptizing—John 4:2 makes clear that Jesus Himself was not baptizing. The Text does not offer any details about the nature of that baptism. We may imagine that they were following John's example, helping to prepare the way of the LORD. The absolute lack of detail makes clear that this baptism did not become a norm to be followed. However, if they were indeed using John's baptism, it continued to be used, here and there, for some time, as Acts 18.25 and 19:3 make clear.

4) In Luke 12:50 Jesus said, "I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!" When Jesus responded to the ambitious request from James and John, He referred to the same baptism (Matthew 20:22-23, Mark 10:38-39). It appears to refer to suffering within God the Father's Plan. In His response to James and John He also referred to the 'cup', the same one He mentioned in Gethsemane. As for Jesus, this baptism was fulfilled on the cross at Golgotha, which happened before the new covenant. As for James and John, they experienced this baptism later on. If my

description of this baptism is correct, then it still exists today (1 Peter 4:19).

Baptisms during the new covenant

1) John the Baptizer said that Jesus would baptize "with Holy spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). There has been no lack of interpretations for this statement, but I would say that the next verse clarifies the intended meaning: "whose winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." See also Matthew 3:11-12. Now then, the 'unquenchable fire' must refer to the Lake of fire and brimstone, the second death, and in that case the 'chaff' refers to the lost—it is the lost who will be baptized with fire.[1] In that case, the 'wheat' refers to the saved—those who are genuinely saved will have been baptized with Holy Spirit. In John 1:33 God Himself says that Jesus will baptize with Holy Spirit. But just how and when does Jesus baptize us with Holy Spirit? He does it from His position at the Father's right hand (1 Peter 3:21-22), when we believe into Him. At that point the Holy Spirit begins to indwell us, and He has a good deal to do with our 'new nature'. I take it that Acts 1:5 refers to this baptism, as does Acts 11:16; it began on the day of Pentecost.

The case of Cornelius deserves its own paragraph. Cornelius <u>really</u> wanted to know God and to please Him—he was serious! So when Peter began to expound, Cornelius hung on his every word. When Peter got to "everyone who believes

[1] According to 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, the <u>works</u> of the saved will be tried by fire. Although John certainly said "and fire", both Matthew (according to 80% of the Greek manuscripts) and Mark omit the phrase. Why? I suppose because they were focusing on the present and near future, while the 'fire' is part of the final Judgment.

into Him[1] will receive forgiveness of sins", Cornelius did! And Jesus baptized him with Holy Spirit. Poor Peter, Jesus got ahead of him, and as he later said in his defense, "who was I to be able to withstand God?" (Acts 11:17). So then Peter said to bring on the water (Acts 10:47)—please notice the order: first Holy Spirit, then water!

I understand Mark 16:16 to refer to this baptism. "The one who believed and was baptized will be saved; but the one who did not believe will be condemned." In the Text, the verbs 'believe' and 'baptize' are participles in the past tense —one could render 'the one having believed and having been baptized'.[2] There will be no lack of people who were baptized with water in Hell; baptism with water does not save. The Text says that the person who did not believe will be condemned, with no mention of baptism—it should be obvious that Jesus will not baptize someone who did not believe. Let me repeat that: <u>it should be obvious that Jesus will not baptize someone who did not believe</u>! It is the person who genuinely believes into Jesus who receives the Holy Spirit. One needs to remember that the commission Jesus stated here in Mark was given in the evening of Resurrection Day, while the commission that He stated in Matthew, that inaugurated Christian baptism, was given weeks later in Galilee. **Here in Mark, Christian baptism did not yet exist**.

I stated that water baptism does not save; how then do I explain Acts 2:38? "Repent and be baptized, each one of you, upon the name of Jesus Christ, for forgiveness of sins,

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[1] The Text always says 'believe <u>into</u>', not 'in'—a change of location is involved, from being outside to being inside, which requires commitment.

[2] Unfortunately, every version that I have seen (including my own!—that I have changed for the fourth edition) puts the verbs in the present tense, which makes it easier to think in terms of water baptism.

and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." To begin, this took place on the day of Pentecost itself, and may have been something of a transition. Then, the context is king of interpretation, and the context here is very specific, so what Peter said should not be taken as a generic standard. Verses 36 and 40 are crucial to understanding Peter. "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom **you** crucified!"[1] (verse 36). So then they asked what they should do. Peter concluded with, "Escape from this perverse generation!" (verse 40). The 'generation' in question was the one that had crucified the Messiah. By being baptized upon the name of **Jesus Christ** they would be formally disassociating themselves from that generation, and the judgment that was coming upon it. This is the first use of the title, Jesus Christ, after the Gospels; the Lord had Himself inaugurated the title fifty days before (John 17:3)—it affirms that Jesus is the Messiah. Anyone being baptized upon that name would be publicly declaring allegiance to Jesus **as the Messiah**. Peter promised forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Spirit to any who entered into that commitment. Anyone who did that would be believing into Jesus, and He would baptize them with Holy Spirit. It was not the water that saved them.

I understand that 1 Peter 3:21 also refers to this baptism; the poor verse has suffered considerably at the hands of commentators. Since there was no lack of water around Noah's Ark, interpreters have tended to carry the water over to the baptism in the next verse, but it does not follow. Consider: verses 19 and 20 mention certain rebellious angels in Noah's day, "while the Ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is eight, souls were brought safely through water".

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[1] Nothing like making sure your audience gets the point! But why "both Lord and Christ"? Perhaps there were a variety of ideas about the 'Messiah' out there and Peter nails down His identity as the Lord.

Then comes verse 21, that I would translate like this: "Its antitype[1] now saves us also, a baptism through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him." So just which baptism might this be? It is Jesus baptizing with Holy Spirit, from His position at the Father's right hand. Just as the Ark preserved the eight from the water, the baptism with the Holy Spirit preserves us from Satan and his subordinates. The careful reader will have noticed that verse 21 above is not complete; I did not include the parenthetical explanatory aside: "(not the removal of physical filth, but the appeal into God from a good conscience)". I would place it at the end of verse 21, as I translated it, between 'Christ' and 'who'. Peter makes it clear that he is not talking about baptism with water.

In John's baptism, he is the agent; in Christ's baptism, He is the agent; a baptism where the Holy Spirit is the agent is different (as also where believers are the agents). In John's baptism, the substance used was water; in Christ's baptism, the substance used is the Holy Spirit. In John's baptism, the person got wet, but then dried off, so the true meaning of the procedure was a spiritual transaction; how much more then with Christ's baptism. I believe that we may link the baptism where Christ is the agent to John 4:13-14 and 7:38-39.

> Jesus answered and said to her: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, **14**but whoever drinks of the water that **I** will give him will never ever thirst; rather, the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water, welling up into eternal life."[2]

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[1] The antecedent of 'its' is the Ark.

[2] That is what the Text says, "into eternal life". Eternal life is a quality of life, more precisely a life in communion with the Father. The

> "The one believing into me, just as the Scripture has said, out from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."[1] **39**(Now He said this about the Spirit, whom those believing into Him were going to receive,[2] in that the Holy Spirit had not yet been *given*, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.)

In other words, when Jesus baptizes you, you are regenerated, you receive a new nature, you receive the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:5 refers to "one Lord, one faith, one baptism". But as we all know, there are a number of baptisms in the Bible, and even in the Church age. The only viable candidate for this 'one baptism' is the one where Jesus Christ, the 'one Lord', is the agent. Anyone who has not been baptized by Jesus is not part of the Church.

2) The main text for Christian baptism, so to say, is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20:

> And approaching, Jesus asserted to them saying: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19**As you go,[3] make disciples in all ethnic nations:

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picture is not necessarily of a geyser, water spouting up, but there has to be a constant flow. As our capacity increases, the flow should also increase. Of course the water must be shared with others, or we become stagnant.

[1] Just where does the Scripture say this, and why "rivers" (pl); would not one be enough? Reference Bibles will give a variety of suggestions, none of which really fit. I personally believe that the reference is to Ezekiel 47:1-12, and most especially to verse 9 where the Hebrew Text has two rivers (or torrents)—when that river got to the Dead Sea it evidently divided, so as to go along both banks at once. Living water takes life and health wherever it goes. So how much living water is flowing out of me, or you? The secret of that water is given in verse 12: "their water flows from the sanctuary" ('their' refers to the trees). Compare 1 Corinthians 6:19.

[2] When you believe into Jesus you receive the Holy Spirit.

[3] The familiar 'therefore' is found in perhaps 5% of the Greek manuscripts, but it is a logical inference.

baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;[1] **20**teaching them to obey everything that I commanded <u>you</u>;[2] and take note, I am with you every day, until the end of the age!"[3]

The order is to make disciples, not just to 'win souls'. So how does one make a disciple? The two gerunds explain it: "baptizing them" and "teaching them", which should be done by those who themselves are genuine disciples. What concerns us here is the baptizing. The substance used is water, as in John's baptism, but the agents are disciples of Jesus. And this baptism is to be administered into the name of the Trinity, which represents a new revelation about the nature of God. It also represents a new 'religion', quite different from those previously known. In the OT there are veiled references, that as we look back we can associate with the Trinity, but here we have the first clear statement on the subject (see footnote 2 below). But what is the significance of being baptized into the name of the Trinity?

A person's name represents that person. To do something 'in the name of the king' means that the something was ordered by that king; the speaker is representing the king (or

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[1] Our Lord defines the Trinity here. According to Greek grammar the use of 'and' plus the definite article with items in a series makes clear that the items are distinct entities. So "the Father" is different from "the Son" is different from "the Holy Spirit". So we have three persons. But He also said, "into <u>the</u> name", singular, not 'names'. So we have only one name. God is one 'name' or essence, subsisting in three persons.

[2] The 'you' here refers to the Eleven (see verse 16), so they were to pass down all the commands that Jesus had given them. To be a disciple of Jesus you should do everything that Jesus had commanded the Eleven to do—this includes healing and casting out demons, as well as preaching the Gospel.

[3] Since the age has not ended, Jesus is still with us. Praise God!

is claiming to do so). So then, what does it mean to be baptized into the Trinity? Well, if you are inside the Trinity, then you are protected by Them, because before anything can get to you it must pass through the Trinity. This is tremendous! However, it also calls for a marked change in behavior—sinning inside the Trinity does not sound like a good idea! So then, the true meaning of this baptism should be the following: it is a public declaration, taking a public stand, whereby the candidate is formally renouncing Satan, and the world controlled by him, and is placing himself under the protection of the Triune God. It is to change sides, or teams, or kingdoms, and this carries with it an appropriate change in lifestyle.[1]

I confess that I do not understand why, to judge by the inspired accounts, the apostles were not rigorous in the manner in which they obeyed the Commission. At least, according to Acts 2:38, the baptism was "upon the name of Jesus Christ", and according to Acts 10:48, Peter commanded to baptize Cornelius and company "in the name of the Lord Jesus".[2] And according to Acts 19:5, Paul baptized those disciples of John "into the name of the Lord Jesus". But upon reflection, I suppose that the practical result would be the same—to be under the protection of Sovereign Jesus would amount to being under the protection of the Trinity.

In fact, Jesus was the ultimate revelation of the nature of God to man. As He Himself said to Philip, "he who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). "In Him all the Fullness was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1:19), and "all the Fullness

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[1] Kind reader, can you name even one local church, in the whole country, that teaches this meaning for this baptism? What a shame!

[2] The Greek manuscripts are divided as to the name here: 35%, including the best line of transmission, have 'the Lord Jesus'; 57% have 'the Lord'; 8% have 'Jesus Christ'. None of the variants refers to the Trinity.

of the Godhead dwells in Him in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). In short, as He walked this earth, Jesus represented the Trinity.

As with John's baptism, the Text does not specify how this baptism was administered. In consequence, down through the centuries, there has been argument and disagreement about it, as to how much water should be used. I see no way of settling the question, and it probably does not make any difference, at least in the spiritual realm. The important thing is the nature of the transaction in the spiritual realm, not the material substance used. But consider the baptism of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:18). At that time there was no plumbing in the houses; any water had to be carried into the house. In the house where Saul was staying, in Damascus, there was certainly no swimming pool, and almost as certainly, no tank of sufficient size to handle a grown man (and even if there was, the owner would not want to have his water contaminated). We may be certain that Ananias used a small amount of water.[1] The same can be said about the dwelling of Cornelius (Acts 10:48)—not much water for a lot of people. The same can be said about the house of the Philippian jailor (Acts 16:33)—not much water for a lot of people. In short, the important thing is the spiritual transaction, not the substance or the manner.

3) In 1 Corinthians 12:12 Paul uses the figure of the members of a body to speak of the Church, and goes on with verse 13: "For we also were all baptized into one body by one Spirit—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and were all given to drink into one Spirit." I take Galatians

[1] In Acts 22:16 Paul himself mentions that experience; he cites Ananias as saying, "and wash away your sins, invoking the name of the Lord". By invoking the Lord, he was placing himself under His protection, which equals believing into Him, which was what took care of his sins, not the baptism.

3:26-28 to be about the same baptism: "So all of you are sons of God through the faith in Christ Jesus. 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ 28—there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no 'male and female';[1] all of you are one in Christ Jesus."[2] I take it that Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ. But how so? When and how would it happen? It would be simultaneous to the moment when Jesus baptizes a person with the Holy Spirit.

Due to a basic human limitation, language is linear—it is impossible to say everything at the same time; the relevant information must be given a piece at a time. Something complex, like the spiritual transformation of a human being, can, and should, be described from different angles or perspectives. When we believe into Sovereign Jesus we receive the Holy Spirit; but at the same time we are introduced into His 'body' here on earth, which is the Church. And it is the presence of the Holy Spirit within us that is the proof that we belong to Jesus and are part of that 'body'—Paul describes that proof as a baptism. A 'baptism in the Spirit' as being a second, or third, 'work of grace', is simply not in the Text. What there is, indeed, are repeated fillings—the more, the better.

4) Due to the limitation that language is linear, it seems to me that in Romans 6:2-4 Paul deals with yet another

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[1] The Text does not have 'neither male nor female'; the formula changes, as I have indicated. I suppose that the reference is to Genesis 1:27, and to the reason for the female in Genesis 2:18. All are saved on the same basis.

[2] The reference is to the spiritual realm, not the physical—a Jew who believes into Jesus does not stop being a physical Jew, a slave who believes into Jesus does not automatically change social status, a male who believes into Jesus does not stop being a physical male. Obvious.

aspect of the spiritual transformation that we receive in Christ. He insists on the necessity of a holy life, using the argument that we were in Jesus when He died, and so we died too, and a corpse shouldn't sin. But since the physical body of Jesus was buried and then raised, we were too, and now we have access to the power of God to enable us to live differently. To cover all that Paul used the phrase, "baptized into Christ Jesus", which probably refers to what the Holy Spirit does, as dis-cussed in the prior item. I take Colossians 2:11-12 to be parallel to Romans 6:2-4.

5) 1 Corinthians 15:29 has given no end of exercise to commentators, and also translators. Most versions just put baptized 'for the dead', but does that mean 'on behalf of the dead', or 'in favor of the dead', or 'because of the dead', or 'in the place of the dead'? The context is the king of interpretation, and the context here is the reality of resurrection. If there is no resurrection, then our faith is in vain, we are suffering needlessly. I would say that the intended meaning is 'in the place of the dead'; that is, new converts occupying the space left by those who had died—in those days there were many martyrs. If there is no resurrection, there would be no point to becoming a Christian, just to feed the lions. The 'baptism' here could include both with the Holy Spirit and with water.

6) It remains to deal with Hebrews 6:2 and 1 Corinthians 1:17. In Hebrews 6:2 'teaching about baptisms' is included in the 'elementary teaching' (verse 1), that should be left behind so we can 'move on toward perfection'. But since that teaching is in the company of repentance, faith, resurrection and eternal judgment, truths that form an essential part of our Faith, it is not being treated as inferior. Such doctrines are part of the foundation for spiritual growth, but that growth depends on factors beyond the basic truths.

But how could Paul say in 1 Corinthians 1:17 that "Christ did not send me to baptize", since in the Great Commission Jesus commanded to do it? Once again, we must pay attention to the context. Beginning at verse 10, Paul is combating divisions based on individuals; there were 'parties', one of them following Paul himself. In an effort to reject that 'party', he argues that no one was baptized into his name (verse 13); and he goes on to thank God that he himself had baptized few people, precisely so that they could not say that he used his own name. Then comes verse 17: "Because Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." Is Paul denying that water baptism is part of the Gospel? It almost seems so. Or was he distinguishing between essential and nonessential? If we define 'essential' as being the elements that are necessary for someone to be saved, then water baptism is a non-essential—it joins other elements that are relevant to spiritual growth, to living the Christian life, and such elements are certainly important.

Conclusion

For us today, the one, all-important, baptism is the one where Jesus is the agent and the substance used is the Holy Spirit. The key is to believe into Jesus. When we believe into Him, He baptizes us with Holy Spirit. Anyone who has not been baptized by Jesus is not part of the Church.

2) Hades is not Hell

This is clear from Revelation 20:14-15—"And Death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire.[1] 15 And if anyone was not found

[1] The first death is the physical one; the second is the spiritual one—eternal separation from the Creator, the Father of spirits (Hebrews 12:9); the essence of death is separation. In physical death, the spirit is separated from the body.

written in the Book of Life he was thrown into the Lake of Fire."[1] Death and Hades are treated as if they were living entities. However that may be, it is clear that Hades and the Lake are distinct. So just what is this 'Lake'?

In this same passage it is stated to be 'the second death'. But consider Revelation 20:10—"And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, where the Beast and the False prophet also are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." The full title, Lake of Fire and Brimstone, having been given in verse 10, in verses 14 and 15 it is shortened to Lake of Fire, but the place is the same, a place of eternal torment. (See also Revelation 21:8.) And now consider Matthew 25:41—"Then He will also say to those on His left: 'Go away from me, you accursed ones, into the eternal fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels'." In verse 46, 'those on His left' are sent into "everlasting punishment". The Lake of fire was prepared for Lucifer (now Satan) and those angels that joined his rebellion (about a third of the angelic beings—Revelation 12:4). Human beings who side with Satan (there are various ways of doing that) will also share his destiny. The term 'Hell', properly understood and utilized, stands for the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, the second and eternal death.

The name 'Gehenna' is a euphemistic metaphor for the Lake of Fire. Versions generally, and correctly, render it as 'hell'. The word occurs in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9 and 23:15, 33; in Mark 9:43, 45, 47; in Luke 12:5 and in James 3:6. In all but the last instance the word was spoken by Jesus Himself. In three of the references Jesus added "of fire". Strictly speaking, 'Gehenna' was the local dump outside

[1] That is right; since no one can be saved by his works, the only way out is the Book of Life!

Jerusalem—something was always being burned, and there would be plenty of worms. Notice Mark 9:43-44.

> **43**Further, if your hand is causing you to fall, cut it off; it is better for you to enter into the Life maimed than having both hands to go away into Gehenna, into the unquench-able fire—**44**where 'their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched'.[1]

I find the figure of an immortal worm to be rather daunting—always chewing on you, but never finishing you off! I freely confess that I prefer never to encounter such a worm! The Lord was presumably referring to Isaiah 66:24. Notice also what He said in Matthew 10:28—"And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear the One who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell [Gehenna]." The destruction of both soul and body must refer to the Lake of Fire, the second death.

The Lord used other expressions to refer to the Lake. In Matthew 13:41-42 He was explaining the parable of the wheat and tares:

> **41**The Son of the Man will send out His angels,[2] and they will collect out of His kingdom everything that is offensive, and those who perpetrate lawlessness;[3] **42**and they will throw them into the furnace of fire. <u>There</u>, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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[1] Perhaps 4% of the Greek manuscripts omit 'into the unquenchable fire' at the end of verses 43 and 45, and also omit verses 44 and 46 entire, to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, [TEV], etc., except that most keep 'into the unquenchable fire' in verse 43 (but not in verse 45). (Evidently there were those who thought that saying it once was quite enough.)

[2] The angels are going to be busy.

[3] I take it that the "kingdom" here is physical (not merely 'spiritual') and includes the whole planet, because it contains "offensive" things and "lawless" people.

"The furnace of fire", where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, is evidently a reference to the Lake. In verses 49-50, same chapter, He said the same thing. In Matthew 8:12, 22:13 and 25:30 Sovereign Jesus used the description: "the darkness farthest away; there, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth". See also Jude 13. Again, the reference is to the Lake, but what did He mean by the 'darkness farthest away', or farthest out? Throughout the NT the term 'darkness' is used to refer to Satan's kingdom, and the Lake is the final destination of that kingdom, and therefore the 'farthest out'. In Matthew 3:12 and Luke 3:17 the Baptizer was explaining what the Christ would do: "He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire". In sum, the term 'Hell', properly understood and utilized, stands for the Lake of Fire and Brimstone, the second and eternal death.

As demonstrated at the outset, Hades and the Lake must be distinct, so just what is 'Hades'? The word occurs in Matthew 11:23 and 16:18, in Luke 10:15 and 16:23, in Acts 2:27 and 31, in 1 Corinthians 15:55 and in Revelation 1:18, 6:8 and 20:13-14. Unfortunately, the AV (KJV) uniformly renders the word as 'hell', thereby misleading the reader and confusing the issue. Fortunately, the NKJV corrects the AV at all those points; but other versions offer a mixture of renderings. Looking at all the relevant contexts, Hades evidently refers to something that exists between a person's physical death and the Lake; it must be some sort of intermediate state or place. The closest thing to an actual description is found in Luke 16:19-31.

> **19**"Now there was a certain rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. **20**And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, who had been placed at his gate, **21**just wanting to

be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table—why even the dogs would come and lick his sores![1] **22**In due time the beggar died and was carried away to Abraham's bosom by the angels. The rich man also died and was buried.[2] **23**And in Hades he looked up and saw Abraham at a distance, and Lazarus very close to him. And being in torment, **24**he called out, saying, 'Father Abra-ham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus,[3] that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; because I am tormented by this flame!' **25**But Abraham said: 'Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus had bad things; but now he[4] is being comforted, and you tormented. **26**And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can anyone from there cross over to us.' **27**Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, **28**because I have five brothers, so that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment'.[5] **29**Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them'. **30**So he said to him, 'Oh no, father Abraham—if someone from the dead should go to them, they will

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[1] In fact, the dogs were doing him a favor, since canine saliva is good for sores.

[2] Note the contrast. Of course the beggar's body had been buried, but the person was taken to Paradise. Here we have an explicit statement of angelic activity, which, however, is absent from the rich man.

[3] I find it to be curious that he still thought that he was better than Lazarus!

[4] The best line of transmission (30% of the Greek manuscripts here) has the emphatic pronoun 'he', rather than 'here'.

[5] I find it interesting that he was concerned for his brothers; we cannot say, "Better late than never", since it made no difference.

repent!' **31**He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone should rise from the dead'."[1]

The Text does not state that this is a parable, so most probably it is not (no parable that is stated to be such employs a person's proper name). Several things in this account invite comment. *Hades* (Greek), or *Sheol* (Hebrew), is the 'halfway house' where departed spirits await the final judgment, but the results of that judgment are already known, since the saved are already separated from the lost (see Hebrews 9:27). There is a chasm separating the two sides that cannot be crossed, but evidently one side can see and hear the other (the 'dead' are conscious and have feeling). People in prison who are waiting for their trial are already suffering.

In verse 22 the side of the saved is called 'Abraham's bosom'. This is the only passage where that phrase occurs; in Luke 23:43 the Lord Jesus called it 'Paradise'.[2] When He said to the repentant robber, "Today you will be with me in Paradise", He was not referring to Heaven. We can deduce this from Acts 2:27. Peter is proving the resurrection by citing David's prophecy in Psalm 16:8-11; Acts 2:27 translates Psalm 16:10—"You will not abandon my soul in Hades, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see decay." 'Hades' is a translation of the Hebrew *Sheol,* that I will discuss below.

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[1] Abraham states a disquieting reality: people who reject God's written revelation are self-condemned. Note also that Abraham did not say it would be impossible to send Lazarus, only that it would do no good. But it is clear that the lost cannot return, or the rich man could have gone himself.

[2] The basic meaning of the term 'paradise' is a garden, and in the NT it is also used of heaven. So why did Jesus call the good side of Hades 'Paradise'? I suppose because the people there were on their way to Heaven, and were already experiencing bliss.

Jesus could not be abandoned there unless He did in fact go there. Referring to the sign of the prophet Jonah, Jesus said, “so will the Son of the Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Mathew 12:40). “In the heart of the earth”—presumably we here have instruction from the Lord on the location of Hades—it is inside the earth, somehow. Compare 1 Samuel 28:13 where Samuel (literally), returning from Hades/Sheol, comes up from inside the earth. If volcanoes can spew out molten rock, it is evidently quite hot down there.

Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15 are parallel, referring to Capernaum: “And you, Capernaum, who are ‘exalted to heaven’, will be brought down to Hades”. Hades is contrasted to heaven (the Text has ‘the heaven’), one being ‘up’ and the other ‘down’. Capernaum is pictured as having a high opinion of itself, an opinion that God does not share. Comparing this with Luke 16:23, the bad side of Hades is in view. The bad side is also in view in Matthew 16:18. “And I further say to you that you are a stone, but on this bedrock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not withstand her.” There is a play on words here, *petros* VS *petra*—the bedrock was obviously not Peter. The bedrock presumably has to do with the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. 'Gates' do not attack, but are the last line of defense for a walled city—it is the Church that is attacking Hades. (The normal meaning of the verb here is ‘prevail’, which is why versions usually render ‘prevail against’, as if it is Hades that is attacking the Church.) I take it that the Church is viewed as saving people from the bad side of Hades—of course it is actually Jesus who does the saving.

In 1 Corinthians 15:55 and the four cases in Revelation, death is mentioned along with Hades. I begin with 1 Corinthians 15:54-56:

54So whenever this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal puts on immortality, then this written word will happen: "Death has been swallowed down into victory". **55**"Where, O Death, is your sting? Where, O Hades, is your victory?"[1] **56**The stinger of death is sin, and the adjunct of sin is the law.

The first quote is from Isaiah 25:8. It is important to note that this whole paragraph is addressed to "brothers" (verse 50), those who enjoy the benefit of Christ's victory over sin and death. The second quote appears to be an interpretation of Hosea 13:14.[2] "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Sin leads to spiritual death and lands the sinner in the bad side of Hades.

In Revelation 1:18, the glorified Jesus declares His victory, in consequence of which He now holds the 'keys of Death and of Hades'. In Hebrews 2:14, the correct translation of the Greek Text is 'abolish the one who <u>had</u> the power of death'. In Revelation 6:8, a sickly pale horse is ridden by Death, 'and Hades follows with him'. The Text does not say that Hades was on a horse. John is stating a fact of human existence: Hades follows death—so it has been for 6,000 years.

I confess that the meaning of Revelation 20:13 is not clear to me. "The ocean gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them; and

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[1] Less than 2% of the Greek manuscripts, of objectively inferior quality, have 'death', instead of "Hades", to be followed by NIV, NASB, LB, TEV, etc.

[2] The LXX is in basic agreement with the NT here, and is probably based upon it, not the opposite. The LXX we know and use is based on manuscripts copied centuries after the NT was written. A strict Pharisee like Saul of Tarsus would certainly use Hebrew manuscripts, not a translation.

they were judged each one according to their works."[1] How can Death be holding dead that are not in Hades? And how can the ocean have a separate roster of dead? However, the context is the Great White Throne, the final judgment. And since only the lost will appear before this throne, proceeding directly to the Lake, they have presumably already been resurrected. In physical death, the spirit is separated from the body, and resurrection is the reuniting of spirit and body. Before resurrection, the spirits of the lost are in Hades; but where are their 'bodies'? The remains of those bodies are either in the sea or on land. If 'death' stands for those on land, then verse 13 could be referring to the resurrection of the lost. That is my best guess as to its intended meaning.

The observant reader may have noticed that after Luke 16 and Acts 2 all the references appear to be dealing with the bad side of Hades. Why might that be? I suggest that the good side is no longer occupied. I believe a case can be made for the understanding that when Jesus resurrected, He took all the good spirits with him, and the spirits of all the saved who have died subsequently are also with Jesus (but still without their glorified bodies).

I will now take up the meaning of the Hebrew *Sheol*. The term occurs some 65 times in the OT. The AV translates it as 'the grave' and 'hell' about 30 times each, the remainder being 'the pit'. Looking at the contexts, I see no reason for the different renderings. In my opinion, it should be transliterated as a proper name throughout. Since the inspired translation in Acts 2:27 equates *Sheol* with *Hades*, I take that to be the correct understanding. I say 'inspired translation'

[1] Twice it says that they will be judged on the basis of their works. So how can you really evaluate someone's deeds? Only by taking account of their context. Those who never heard the Gospel will be judged within the context that they lived, and the Judge will prove that even within their own context they did not measure up.

because Peter was doubtless speaking Hebrew, but the inspired account is in Greek.

To recapitulate and conclude, properly understood and utilized, 'Hell' refers to the Lake of Fire and brimstone, the second and eternal death. 'Sheol/Hades' refer to the halfway house where departed human spirits await the resurrection and the final judgment. However, since the resurrection of Christ, I believe the side of the saved, 'Abraham's bosom', is now empty.

3) Some related anomalies in Matthew's genealogy of the Christ

Matthew's purpose is to demonstrate that Jesus, the Messiah, has a legal right to sit on David's throne (perhaps answering the Lord's own question in Matthew 22:42). Although there are many kings in the genealogy, David is the only one who is described as 'the king', twice. Since David's throne has to do with the covenant people, and that covenant began with Abraham, the genealogy does as well. It ends with Joseph, Jesus' 'father' by adoption, since Jesus had none of Joseph's genes.[1] It was sufficient to Matthew's purpose to show that Joseph was a linear, and legal, descendant of David, the number of intervening generations was beside the point. Matthew's Gospel was directed primarily to a Jewish audience, to whom legal rights were important.

Matthew divides his genealogy of the Christ into three groups of fourteen 'generations'. A comparison of his

[1] Indeed, He could not, because of the prophesies in Jeremiah 22:30 and 36:30, wherein Jeconiah and Jehoiakim are cursed. However, Jesus received some of David's genes through Mary (please see the note that accompanies Luke 3:23 in my translation).

genealogy with the OT record indicates that it is not a 'normal', straightforward genealogy—there are some anomalies.[1] In an effort to understand the purpose behind the anomalies, I will begin with the second group, which may be said to be made up of sovereign kings of Judah. Going back to the OT we discover that there were seventeen such kings, not four-teen. But, Matthew says 'generations', not reigns, and since Ahaziah reigned only one year, Amon only two, and Abijah only three, they can be assimilated into the fourteen gene-rations. That said, however, we next observe that Abijah and Amon are duly included in the list, while Ahaziah is not, followed by Joash and Amaziah. The three excluded names form a group between Jehoram and Uzziah.

Verse eight says that "Joram begot Uzziah," the verb 'begot' being the same one used throughout, but in fact Uzziah was Joram's (Jehoram's) great-great-grandson. So we see that 'begot' refers to a linear descendant, not necessarily a son. We also see that the number 'fourteen' is not being used in a strictly literal sense (whatever the author's purpose may have been). It also appears that 'generation' is not being used in a strictly literal sense. It follows that we are looking at an edited genealogy, edited in accord with the author's purpose.

In an effort to understand why the group of three was excluded, I ask: What might they have in common? They had in common genes from Ahab and Jezebel, as also a direct spiritual and moral influence from them. Ahaziah's mother was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, so 50% of his genes were from Ahab. 2 Kings 8:27 says that Ahaziah was a

[1] I believe that Matthew composed his Gospel under divine guidance, which leads me to the conclusion that the anomalies were deliberate, on God's part. Therefore, my attempt to unravel the anomalies tries to understand the Holy Spirit's purpose in introducing them into the record.

son-in-law of the house of Ahab, referring to the mother of Joash, so 75% of his genes were from Ahab. Since Joash married Jehoaddan of Jerusalem, the contamination in Amaziah was down to 37%, and then in Uzziah it was below 20%.[1] This is my best guess as to why that group was excluded; a rebuke after the fact. (Matthew is giving an edited genealogy of the Christ, and Ahab's genes were definitely undesirable.)

We come now to another anomaly: 14 x 3 = 42, but only 41 names are given; what to do? We begin by noticing that both David and Jeconiah are mentioned on both sides of a 'boundary'. I will consider the second boundary first. Verse eleven says that "Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers," passing over Jehoiakim, Jeconiah's father. But according to the Record, it was Jehoiakim who had "brothers", not Jeconiah. Since we need the real Jeconiah in the third group to make fourteen names, I place Jeconiah in the third group —counting both Jeconiah and Christ we get fourteen names.[2] But why was Jehoiakim omitted? So far as I know, he was the only king who had the perversity to actually cut up a scroll with God's Word and then throw it in the fire, Jeremiah 36:23, and the curse that follows in verse 30 is stated to be a consequence of that act. If we count David in the second group, Jehoiakim would make fifteen. But without Jehoiakim we need David in the second group to make fourteen. But that raises another difficulty: we also need David in the first group, to make fourteen. Because of the

[1] It was Dr. Floyd N. Jones who started me thinking along this line (*Chronology of the Old Testament: A Return to the Basics*, King's Word Press, 1999, pp. 38-42).

[2] Of course, if four people were omitted from the second group, some may also have been omitted from the third, but we have no way of knowing, and it would make no difference to the purpose of this genealogy.

“brothers”, I consider that the ‘Jeconiah’ before the captivity actually stands for Jehoiakim, whose name is omitted because of his heinous crime in destroying the scroll. In that event, we have fourteen without David, so he can be assigned to the first group.

If the second group is made up of kings, the first group is made up of patriarchs. Acts 2:29 calls David a ‘patriarch’, so we may not disqualify him on that basis, but of course he is better known as a king—indeed he is expressly called that in the genealogy (the only one who is). Although David may be both patriarch and king, he may not be two people, nor two generations. In consequence, I am decidedly uncomfortable with the proposal that David must be placed in both groups —we should neither split him in two, not double him. To my mind, he fits better in the second group, but that would leave only thirteen for the first one. Enter Rahab and Ruth (and if four people were omitted from the second group, why could not some also be omitted from the first?). However, I tentatively assign David to the first group, making fourteen. Since David is used as the first boundary, and the purpose of the genealogy is to establish Jesus’ right to David’s throne, his name is repeated, but I do not count him in the second group.

There were 340 years between the death of Joshua and the birth of David, and Salmon married Rahab while Joshua was still alive, presumably. That sort of obliges Boaz, Obed and Jesse to do their begetting at age 100, or thereabouts (perhaps not impossible, but certainly improbable). But what if ‘begot’ is being used for a grandson, as we have already seen? (Josiah begot Jeconiah, with no mention of Jehoiakim.) If Athaliah's genes were enough to disqualify Ahaziah, what about Rahab’s genes? She was not even an Israelite, and worse, she was a prostitute. Now the Law says some rather

severe things about prostitutes.[1] "You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog [catamite] to the house of the LORD your God… for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God" (Deuteronomy 23:18). For a priest to marry a harlot would profane his posterity (Leviticus 21:13-15), so how about an ancestor of the Messiah? Of course it is possible for a prostitute to be saved, but why was she even mentioned? And why were Tamar, Ruth, and Uriah's wife mentioned? Women were not normally included in genealogies.[2]

Now consider Ruth. She was a Moabitess, and according to Deuteronomy 23:3 a Moabite could not enter the assembly of the LORD to the tenth generation. [To me it is an astonishing example of the grace of God that she was included in the Messiah's line.] She embraced Naomi's God, but what about her genes? 'Ten generations' has to do with genes, not spiritual conversion. Moab was a son of Lot, and the first 'Moabite' would be his son, probably a contemporary of Jacob. From Jacob to Salmon we have seven generations, certainly fewer than ten, so Ruth could not enter. Could it be possible that Rahab and Ruth each represent a missing generation? Could that be why they are mentioned?[3] If we divide 300 years by five, then the average begetting age would be 60, certainly within the bounds of reason (and if more than two generations were skipped, the number would

[1] However, "the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). This being an edited genealogy of the Messiah, perhaps Rahab, and the other women, were included to emphasize the grace of the Messiah.

[2] None of the decent, honest, honorable, responsible mothers are mentioned, only 'exceptions'!

[3] Tamar had suffered a severe injustice, and David's sin with Bathsheba was unusually perverse (cowardly murder), but Rahab was probably a victim of circumstances, and Ruth was certainly not to blame for having been born a Moabitess.

be further reduced). I repeat that this is not a 'normal' genealogy. Why did Matthew want three 'equal' groups, and why did he choose 'fourteen'? Perhaps for stylistic (symmetry, balance) and mnemonic reasons. However, my concern has been to address any perceived errors of fact, which an inspired Text should not have.

To conclude: Matthew gives us an edited genealogy of the Messiah. If on the one hand it emphasizes the Messiah's grace, on the other it reflects the Messiah's holiness—He cannot overlook sin and its consequences (the four excluded names in the second group are due to that holiness). If the four women were included as a reflection of the Messiah's grace, it is also true that the consequences of sin are not hidden—the fourth is called simply 'Uriah's wife' (not 'widow', even though Solomon was conceived after the murder of Uriah—David did not marry a widow, he stole someone else's wife).

4) The problem of Dinah's age

Genesis 33:4, "Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, falling on his neck and kissing him; and they wept."

Jacob and Esau certainly said much more than is recorded in the Text. Jacob certainly asked for news of his parents, and it is more than likely that Rebekah was already dead. Sarah died at the age of 127, and Rebekah was at least 120 when Jacob fled, and he had been gone twenty years. This explains why Jacob was in no hurry to see his father. It is also possible that Jacob was bitter toward his father: if Isaac had recognized what God had told Rebekah, and the fact that Esau had sold the birthright, and had not tried to bless Esau anyway, Jacob would not have gone through the distress and humiliation that he did. In fact, it seems that Isaac was in his last ten years when Jacob finally showed up (**35:27-29**). The

fact that Jacob was in no hurry to see his father explains what happened at Succoth.

Genesis 33:16, "So Esau returned that day to Seir by the same route. **17** And Jacob went to Succoth, and built himself a house, and made shelters for his cattle; therefore, he called the name of that place Succoth."

The name means: shelters. We do not know how long Jacob stayed in Succoth, but if he built a house for himself and made shelters for his livestock, he certainly stayed there for some time; probably a few years. They were accustomed to tents; it is very strange that he would have built a house. In **31:3** Jehovah said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers, and to your family"; but since Succoth was on the east side of the Jordan, Jacob stopped before entering that land. Jacob's attitude is indeed strange.

On second thought, Jacob must have stayed there for quite a number of years, because of the problem of Dinah's age. When they arrived in Succoth, Reuben, the firstborn, could have been no more than thirteen years old. **30:21** says that Dinah was born "after" Zebulun, Leah's sixth son, so Dinah may not have been even five years old. To attract Shechem's attention, she would have had to be a well-developed teenager, probably at least fifteen years old. Also, Simeon and Levi would have been no more than twelve and eleven when they arrived in Succoth, but to do what they did (**34:25**), they would have had to be men at full strength. Furthermore, Jacob may have wanted to have grown sons as a defense against attack. They stayed in Succoth for at least ten years, but I would guess that it was between thirteen and fifteen. The time they spent near Shechem before plundering the city was probably not very long.

5) The theory of evolution is scientifically impossible

All genuine science is based on the principle of cause and effect—we observe an effect and try to isolate the cause; and it is logically impossible for a cause to produce an effect larger or more complex than itself. Any human being who is both honest and intelligent, when confronted with the observable universe with its incredible organization and complexity, is obliged to conclude that there must be a CAUSE, a Cause with intelligence and power beyond our understanding—to refuse to do so is to be perverse. Since we have personality, He must also.

The only alternative to a Cause would be chance working with nothing. But it is stupidly, ridiculously impossible that chance, working blindly with nothing, could produce anything. 10 x 0 = 0, 1,000 x 0 = 0, 1,000,000 x 0 = 0, and so on; no matter how many times you multiply zero, the result is always zero. If you multiply zero by something every day during five billion (or trillion) years, the result will always be zero. That chance working blindly with nothing produced the universe is scientifically impossible: absolutely, stupidly, ridiculously impossible. Even if one starts with the superstition of a 'big bang' of inorganic (without life) material, where did life come from. [I bypass the question of where all that inorganic material came from.]

The science of physics tells us that the inorganic [no life] known universe can be described with up to 350 information 'bits'; but it takes 1,500 information 'bits' to describe the smallest protein—it is so small that it cannot live by itself, but it is part of a living system. So how could evolution produce life? Where could chance find 1,150 'bits' of new information, if in the whole universe there were only 350? Not only that, the 'e-coli' bacteria takes about seven million 'bits', and

one human cell takes around twenty billion 'bits'! The theory of evolution, to explain the origin of life, is stupidly, ridiculously impossible!!

The science of genetics, with its genome projects, has discovered that a random change of only three nucleotides is fatal to the organism. Consider the chimpanzee, presumably man's 'nearest relative': the genetic difference is said to be about 1.6%. That may not sound like much, but it is around 48 million nucleotide differences, and a random change of only three nucleotides is fatal to the animal—it follows that it is simply impossible for a chimp to evolve until it becomes a man (some 15 million chimps would perish in the attempt, never getting beyond the first three nucleotides!). Each different type of animal had to be created separately, just as Genesis affirms. Any evolutionary hypothesis, to explain the different types of animals (not to mention birds, insects, fish, plants, etc.) is scientifically impossible: absolutely, stupidly, ridiculously impossible.

The so-called 'geologic column' is a fiction. In Australia there are fossilized tree trunks, upright, passing through various layers of sedimentary rock, that according to the 'geologic column' represent many millions of years—stupidly, ridiculously impossible! In the U.S. there is a high plateau (mesa) with a layer of older rock on top of a layer of newer rock (according to the 'column'), but the area involved is so extensive that no known force would be able to overcome the friction caused by an attempt to have one layer slide over the other layer (the argument that is used)—this also is impossible for the 'geologic column'.

Some 60 miles southwest of Dallas, Texas, there is a town called Glen Rose, that is close to the Paluxy River. The Dinosaur Valley State Park is located there, because the river bed has tracks of two types of dinosaur: three-toed and four-toed. Upriver from the park a paleontologist named Dr. Carl

Baugh bought a significant amount of land on both sides of the river, so he could do his own excavations. On his property he has a museum that I myself have visited. In the **same layer** of sedimentary rock he encountered the following: two trilobite fossils, that evolutionists say existed 550 million years ago; a fossilized moss called 'lapidodendron', that evolutionists say existed 250 million years ago; a complete fossil of a dinosaur called 'acrocanthasaurus' (40 feet long), that evolutionists say existed 100 million years ago; seven tracks of a huge 'cat', that evolutionists say existed 6 million years ago; 57 human footprints (some being inside a dinosaur track) [I have seen it]; the fourth finger of a woman's left hand, fossilized; and even a pre-diluvian iron hammer (its iron does not rust, being 96.6% iron and 2.7% chlorine)—**all of that in the very same layer of sedimentary rock**!

It follows that a geologic column does not exist; it is a perverse invention perpetrated by dishonest and perverse persons. All those fossils were produced by Noah's Flood, about 4,365 years ago; otherwise, how can you explain that all those things are in the very same layer of rock? (We may note in passing that it is common for defenders of the 'geologic column' to argue in a circle: the age of a rock layer is determined by the fossils it contains, while the age of a fossil is determined by the rock layer where it is found!)

Furthermore, the earth is young. In the royal observatory in England they have been measuring the force of the magnetic field that surrounds the earth each year since 1839. They have found that the magnetic force is diminishing at a constant rate, or geometric progression: plotting the yearly values on a graph, they form a cline. This means that it is possible to project the line in both directions. If we project the line to a point 10,000 years ago, the magnetic force would be so strong that it would crush all life on the planet.

It follows that any theory that requires millions, or billions of years is stupidly, ridiculously impossible.

The Mississippi river dumps 80,000 tons of sediment into the gulf of Mexico [now America] every hour! All you have to do is measure the delta to see that the earth is young. The diameter of the sun is diminishing at the rate of about 40 inches every hour. Projecting backwards for 100,000 years the sun would be twice its present size—it would fry everything on the earth's surface; there would be no life. Evolutionists say that granite took 300 million years to crystalize, but within granite there are polonium 'haloes' with half-lives of minutes, or even seconds. Granite had to be created instantaneously. Symbiotic plants and insects had to be created at the same time, and require 24-hour days. And so on.

In short, the evolutionary hypothesis of origins is scientifically impossible: absolutely, stupidly, ridiculously impossible. A number of decades ago the scholar Sir Frederick Hoyle was contracted to evaluate the scientific probability that life could have appeared on the planet by chance (he had unlimited funding and free access to libraries). He arrived at the following conclusion: it would be easier for a whirlwind to pass through a junk yard and a perfect Boeing 747 come flying out of the other side than for life to have appeared on our planet by chance. Well, well, well, that life could have originated by an evolutionary process is obviously, stupidly, ridiculously impossible! [By the way, any questions about the morality of the Creator have nothing to do with science.]

6) Where is Mt. Sinai?

I invite attention to Galatians 4:25, that declares that Mt. Sinai is in Arabia: I don't know Paul's definition of 'Arabia', but what the maps call 'Mt. Sinai' probably is not the real

one;[1] consider: When Moses fled from Pharaoh he stopped in Midian (Exodus 2:15). Midian lies on the east side of the eastern 'rabbit-ear' of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Aqaba), in present day Saudi Arabia. It has never been part of the so-called 'Sinai Peninsula'. It was at "Horeb, the mountain of God" that Moses saw the 'burning bush' (Exodus 3:1), and in verse 12 God tells Moses: "when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain". Mt. Horeb has always been in Midian. (Present day Saudi Arabia calls it 'el Lowz', and has it fenced off.) As God continues with Moses' commission, He specifies "three days' journey into the wilderness" (verse 18). According to Exodus 4:27 Aaron met Moses at "the mountain of God" (Horeb, in Midian), and they went together to Egypt.

When the people left Egypt, God led them on a forced march; notice the "so as to go by day and night" (Exodus 13:21). Three days of forced march (Exodus 3:18) would have gotten them close to Ezion Geber (present day Elath), and just another two days would have put them well into Midian. But then God told them to "turn back" and "encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal Zephon" (Exodus 14:2). To do this they had to leave the established route from Egypt to Arabia, and head south into the wilderness, and this led Pharaoh to conclude that they had lost their way (obviously he would have spies following them, mounted on good horses, to keep him informed). It would have been simply impossible for them to lose their way between Goshen and the western arm

[1] The difficulty here is not in the Text itself, but in the circumstance that almost all modern maps, whether in Bibles or elsewhere, place Mt. Sinai in the peninsula between the two gulfs, Suez and Aqaba; so much so that the peninsula itself is even so named. But such a location for the mount makes the Biblical account out to be ridiculous, as I explain below, and an inspired Text should not be ridiculous.

of the Red Sea (the Gulf of Suez), but that is what those who place Mt. Sinai in today's 'Sinai Peninsula' are obliged to say —an evident stupidity. The Israelites would have hunted and explored all over that area, down through the years. (And why the chariots? Pharaoh could have surrounded them with foot soldiers.)

God led them down a ravine called 'Wadi Watir' which comes out on a surprisingly large beach called 'Nuweiba' (it is the only beach on that gulf large enough to accommodate that crowd of people and animals). Most of the Gulf of Aqaba is many hundreds of feet deep, with sheer sides, but precisely at Nuweiba there is a land bridge not far below the surface that goes from shore to shore, the width of the gulf at that point being close to 10 miles—the width of the land bridge is several hundred yards, so there was an ample 'causeway' for the crossing. The ravine that opens out on Nuweiba is narrow, with steep sides, so when God moved the pillar of cloud to the mouth of the ravine, Pharaoh and his chariots were blocked. They could not pass the pillar, they could not climb the sides of the ravine with chariots, and with over six hundred chariots in a narrow ravine they would have a proper 'gridlock' (lots of unhappy horses!). I suppose that God removed the pillar of cloud while part of the crowd was still on the land bridge, which encouraged Pharaoh to chase after them; and we know the rest of the story. If God let them get out to the middle, they would be five miles from either shore, too far for most people to swim.[1] I take it that God's purpose was to destroy the Egyptian army so it could not be a threat to Israel in the early years.

[1] In our day chariot pieces have been discovered along that land bridge.

7) Who bought what from whom, and where?

Stephen X Genesis

> Acts 7:15-16—"So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers; and they were transferred to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor of Shechem."

When we compare this text with the relevant passages in Genesis, we appear to be confronted with some discrepancies. Who bought what from whom, and where? Genesis 33:19 informs us that Jacob bought a plot from Hamor, in Shechem. On the other hand, Genesis 23:16-20 explains that Abraham bought an area that included the cave of Machpelah from Ephron, in Hebron. That cave became the sepulcher of Abraham and Sarah, of Isaac and Rebecca, and of Jacob and Lea, because Jacob insisted upon being buried there, as indeed he was (Genesis 49:29-30, 50:13). Looking again at Acts 7, it was 'our fathers' who were buried in Shechem, not Jacob. Indeed, Joshua 24:32 states explicitly that Joseph's bones were buried in Shechem.

Yes but, whenever did Abraham buy anything in Shechem? I believe Genesis 12:6-7 gives us the clue. Abraham stopped in Shechem and built an altar. Now then, to build on someone else's property, with that someone looking on, probably won't work very well. I believe we may reasonably deduce that Abraham bought a plot "from the sons of Hamor of Shechem." The 'Hamor' of Jacob's day would be a descendant of the 'Hamor' in Abraham's (sons were often named after their fathers). In Genesis 14:14 we read that Abraham "armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house." If we add women and children, the total number of people under Abraham's command was probably over a thousand. Well now, with

such a crowd it is not at all unlikely that someone died while they were stopped at Shechem. (People older than Abraham would not have been 'born in his own house', but there were doubtless older persons in that crowd.) In that event Abraham would need space for a cemetery, if the plot he had already bought for the altar was not big enough, or appropriate. That sort of information may have been available to Stephen from an extra-biblical document, or he may have figured it out as I have done (in his case guided by the Holy Spirit—Acts 7:55).

Going back to Genesis 33:19, it is possible that Jacob increased the area that Abraham had bought, by purchase. But why were all of Jacob's sons buried in Shechem? I believe the answer lies in Genesis 34:27-29. We read that Jacob's sons killed all the men of Shechem, looted everything, but kept the women and children. And what do you suppose they did with the women? So where did you think they found wives for so many men? They got them from Shechem. Since Shechem was the source of their wives and material possessions, it would be a natural place for them to be buried.

To conclude: there is no discrepancy. Both Abraham and Jacob bought land in Shechem. It was Jacob's sons who were buried there, not Jacob himself.